New veterans law expands coverage of the GI Bill. PAGE 3
CNMI awarded $2.5M in technical assistance grants. PAGE 5

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Hafa Adai!

75¢

Saipan Tribune

IPI fails to meet deadline to pay $15.5M license fee

» Citing force majeure, IPI requests abatement of casino license fee for 2020; delay in payment of $3M to support CCC's operations

Construction on the IPI casino building remains ongoing.
KRIZEL TUAZON

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, Aug. 12, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	434	15	449
Recovered	325	16	341
Active	88	15	103
Deaths	6*	0	6*
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested		26,377	

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	49	0	49
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested		12,301**	

*Total includes a sailor from the USS *Theodore Roosevelt.*

**Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Contrary to earlier assurances, Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC failed to meet yesterday's deadline to pay the $15.5 million annual casino license fee.

Browne

IPI chief executive officer Donald R. Browne informed Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Senate President Victor B. Hocog (R-Rota), House Speaker Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan) in a letter Tuesday that IPI will not be able to pay the annual license fee that was due yesterday.

See IPI on Page 4

Over 500 teachers return to work

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The Public School System has lifted the furlough for the first batch of teachers in preparation for the upcoming school year, which is set to begin on Sept. 8.

During a press conference last Tuesday, Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada said PSS has already recalled over 500 furloughed teachers.

The next batch of teachers, over 200, are still waiting on the PSS administration's signal lifting the furlough on them.

See OVER on Page 4

PIC rented for night of quarantine

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

With the overflow of people in quarantine at Kanoa Resort in Susupe and Mariana Resort & Spa in Marpi, the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force had to rent overnight quarantine accommodations for inbound travelers at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio last Aug 10.

See PIC on Page 4

The Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio. KRIZEL TUAZON

USCIS extends transitional parole for long-term resident status applicants

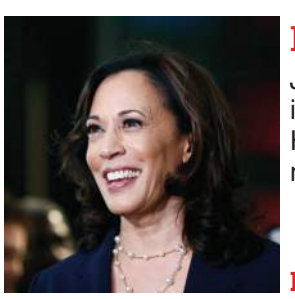
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced yesterday that it will automatically extend parole, and employment authorization if applicable, for parolees who timely applied for CNMI long-term resident status.

This specific extension of parole applies only to current parolees who timely filed Form I-955, Application for CNMI Long-Term Resident Status, and Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, and whose applications remain pending on Aug. 17. USCIS will automatically extend their parole (and

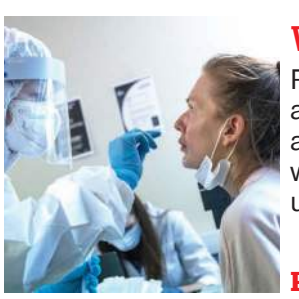
See USCIS on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Rendezvous International Cuisine atop Saipan Vegas along Beach Road in Chalan Kiya reopens.
PAGE 11



NATION
Joe Biden named California Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate, making histor
PAGE 12



WORLD
Russia has approved a coronavirus vaccine, a move that was met with skepticism and unease.
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Local

Chamber wants reduced govt fees, taxes to aid biz

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce has identified the reduction in Business Gross Revenue Tax or Excise Tax or other government fees as the means with which the CNMI government can provide the most financial relief to local businesses at this time.

This comes soon after the Chamber did a survey among local businesses about the impact of COVID-19, with 57% of responders saying that a tax break would be the best relief they can get at this time. Armed with this information, Chamber president Velma M. Palacios and the Chamber board of directors asked Gov. Ralph DLG Torres last week to provide financial relief for businesses through a reduction in BGRTs, Excise Tax, or government fees. This step, they said, would show that the CNMI government cares about their plight.

Palacios

"As indicated in our survey responses, businesses are desperately in need of financial relief, and there have been no local relief efforts that show businesses that the government cares about their ability to survive," Palacios said.

To help encourage more businesses to stay open, the Chamber proposes that the CNMI government either reduce the BGRT or excise taxes, or minimize government fees for the remainder of 2020. "While we understand the government may have to make additional cuts or operate at a loss, our economy has a better chance of rebounding post-COVID-19 with these reductions now, rather than trying to build up new businesses to replace those that have closed. Support from the CNMI Legislature and individual government agencies is needed to provide this relief and send the message to the businesses that the CNMI government wants them to fight to stay open," she said.

Additionally, Palacios also proposed that the government focus on local commerce for the remainder of 2020 because there is not a clear message that it is safe for them to resume operations that encourage local commerce within the community.

"At a time when we are unsure about when international flights will resume, we must do all we can to ensure residents feel confident they can safely resume their normal operations," Palacios said.

Some of the Chamber's suggestions include removal of some restrictions while in Vulnerability Level Blue that interfere with commerce. This includes curfew, removal of restrictions that allow businesses to operate as long as they adhere to social distancing and safety measures, and removing measures regarding public parks and beaches that are not being enforced to the same degree businesses are monitored for enforcement.

The Chamber also suggests encouraging more types of outreach that explain current quarantine measures because the current confusion is keeping residents at home rather than frequenting safe establishments that keep local dollars stimulating the economy.

Another Chamber suggestion is for the government to provide more consistent information to businesses about the resumption of international travel as this would help them make key business decisions that affect their everyday operations.

Lastly, the Chamber also proposed that the government seek external funding for business financing programs.

"As seen in our survey results, many businesses have not been able to access the capital needed to help carry them through the current economic downturn. We understand that the CNMI government is not in a position to offer grant programs for businesses, as was available in both Guam and Hawaii. However, we ask that you direct the appropriate government agencies to apply for funding opportunities that can help stimulate economic growth," Palacios said.

ELECTION CONCERNS
The Commonwealth Elections Commission appears before the House of Representatives last July 30, 2020, with the Office of the Public Auditor to discuss outstanding concerns as well as how the CNMI would go about the November elections, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.
IVA MAURIN

SEABEES ON TINIAN
Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Brandon Block, from Belle Plaine, Min., assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3's Detail Tinian, performs maintenance on the fuel system of a skid-steer on Camp Tinian.
U.S. NAVY/MARCUS HENLEY

Builder Constructionman Matthew Best, from Stockton, Calif., assigned to U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3's Detail Tinian, reaffirms the proper placement of a gable-end on a Southwest Asia hut being constructed on Camp Tinian.
U.S. NAVY/MARCUS HENLEY

Steelworker 3rd Class Bryce Thompson, from New Castle, Ind., assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3's Detail Tinian, cuts corrugated metal sheeting to be used for the construction of a Southwest Asia hut on Camp Tinian.
U.S. NAVY/MARCUS HENLEY

Equipment Operator 3rd Class James Pace, from Frankton, Ind., assigned to U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3's Detail Tinian, directs a front-end loader into position as it dumps a mixture of dirt and gravel for work on vehicular routes on Camp Tinian.
U.S. NAVY/MARCUS HENLEY

USDA awards OVR with $86K grant funding

The CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation has been awarded over $80,000 in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for operations and assisting special needs individuals with employment opportunities.

According to a statement from the Office of the Governor on Monday, $50,000 was awarded from the USDA Community Facilities Grant, while $36,000 was awarded from the USDA Economic Impact Grant, bringing the total award amount to $86,000.

This funding will be used to buy office equipment for OVR staff to better serve the CNMI's special needs community who are seeking job assistance.

"We are very thankful to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for giving us the opportunity to secure this grant funding. Even with the existing pandemic, our staff continues to work hard to assist our community members with disabilities. This funding will go a long way toward purchasing much needed upgrades to help improve our office's overall efficiency and the services to assist our special needs community," said OVR director Maryann Borja-Arriola.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios would also like to thank the U.S. Department of Agriculture for awarding the CNMI with this crucial grant assistance.

"Despite the challenges our country our Commonwealth are currently facing, we are thankful for the opportunity from our federal partners at USDA to avail of this funding and help improve the services provided to our community members with special needs. They will continue to be a priority. We would like to thank director Borja-Arriola and the entire staff at OVR for their efforts to secure this funding and for continuing to serve those in need," said Torres. ***(PR)***

New veterans law expands coverage of the GI Bill

The Northern Marianas College has a $400 course to help prepare for the NCLEX nurse licensing exam. Latte Training Academy offers CompTIA certification exam courses for those entering IT professions. A new law that was crafted Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) now allows veterans to use their G.I. Bill educational benefits to cover those costs.

This comes soon after President Trump signed on Saturday the Ryan Kules and Paul Benne Special Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019, which includes legislation that Sablan drafted and added to the bill before its enactment. This means that veterans and their eligible family members will now be able to use their G.I. Bill educational benefits to cover the cost of preparatory courses for license and certification exams.

This is Sablan's second veterans bill to become law this year.

Sablan's new law allows the Veterans Administration to pay the fees for courses that prepare students for license and certification tests, like the NCLEX nurse licensing exam or CompTIA certification exam courses.

"Covering these test prep courses as a GI bill benefit will make it easier for veterans and their eligible family members to enter in-demand careers in health care, technology, teaching, finance, and other fields that require government licenses and certifications," Sablan said. Before, only the test fees were covered by the GI Bill.

As a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Sablan has made it a goal to make more benefits available to returning service members and their families. Up to 30% of Marianas high school graduates enter the military each year, according to the Public School System.

He has also focused on protecting veterans benefits during the coronavirus crisis. H.R. 6262, Sablan's other veterans' legislation to become law this year, safeguards vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits and subsistence payments, if a school a veteran was attending closes. H.R. 6262 was piggybacked on to the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act enacted in March.

In addition to Sablan's preparatory course provisions, the Special Adaptive Housing Improvement Act increases the number and funding of grants to help disabled veterans buy, build or modify homes to meet their needs and live more independently. The law also cuts the time students wait to get paid under the VA's Work-Study program. Instead of taking weeks for VA to process these payments, schools can now receive direct funding to pay students for their work. ***(PR)***

Kilili: One-party system has led to cronyism, corruption

Delegate Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (Independent-MP), center, poses with Democratic Party candidates, from left, Rep. Richard Lizama, Edith Deleon Guerrero, and Peter Reyes Muna during the Democratic Party's filing of candidates last week. At the extreme right is Sen. Paul A. Manglona (Independent-Rota) who, along with Sablan, came to support the Democratic Party's candidates.
FERDIE DE LA TORRE

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) believes that a one-party system—similar to what has been happening in the CNMI—is not ideal as it leads to cronyism and corruption, and makes the government inefficient.

"Maybe it is ironic for me to say this because I am running unopposed, but for too long, I think, Marianas voters have felt they had no real choice," said Sablan in response to *Saipan Tribune*'s request for comments about having a two-party system again in the CNMI.

The NMI Democratic Party is fielding 18 candidates, including nine women, for the Nov. 3 general elections, which is a first in over four decades, and making a two-political party system alive again in the Commonwealth.

Sablan said a competition of ideas and values leads to better public policy.

He said it is good to see the Democratic Party organizing again to give people a meaningful choice in how to run the CNMI government and a slate of honest, smart, hard-working candidates. "I am not saying there are no good Republicans or Independents—I am running as an Independent," Sablan said.

The delegate said as an organized group of candidates, there seem to be the view that in this Nov. 3 general elections, Democratic candidates have much more to offer to the people of the Marianas than what the Republicans have been giving the people for so many years. "People really want change," he said.

Sablan describes his unopposed run in this election as "humbling."

Sablan ran unopposed in the November 2016 election.

He said being unopposed means he can spend all of his time working to help the people of the Marianas stay safe and get through the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. "So, yes, in the middle of this crisis, I appreciate being unopposed," the delegate said.

He said running unopposed again means to continue to be of service, knowing that he can represent the people and the islands.

Sablan added that being unopposed also means the leadership in Congress know that he has the full confidence of the people he represents and will be back to work in the 117th Congress.

Sablan, 65, has filed his candidacy to seek an unprecedented seventh term as the CNMI's delegate in the U.S. House of Representatives for this Nov. 3 general elections.

First elected in 2008, he became the first delegate from the CNMI.

Although he was re-elected as an independent in 2014, 2016, and 2018 elections, Sablan caucuses with Democrats in Congress.

Torres: New Trump orders will help our people

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

Despite concerns in the U.S. mainland regarding the legality of the executive order that U.S. President Donald J. Trump signed last week to help those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Torres administration is looking into it to see how the CNMI could benefit from the new policies.

Torres

Trump's executive order covers four concerns: a $400 weekly unemployment benefit; the deferment of payroll tax obligation from Sept. 1 to Dec. 31; assistance to renters and homeowners; and the extension of student loan payment relief.

Speaking at the radio news briefing Tuesday, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said he will not be challenging the order, that he fully supports it, and that it will make a big difference for the CNMI.

"My staff and the departments…are looking as to how the CNMI can benefit from it, and we will be informing the community as to what is the next step moving forward. I want to move forward with the understanding that it's an executive order. If we avail of it, then we should push hard and get our people some needed funds," he said.

The governor said that they have been in talks with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and will be making all the proper requests, also to the appropriate departments that covers tax, renters, and homeowners.

One of the concerns raised about Trump's executive order is that states have to ask the White House to participate in the lost wages assistance program and the CNMI government has to shoulder 25% of the cost.

"[What] we're [going to] look first is the availability of the matching [funds], second and simultaneously, is to look at the [numbers] here—how many renters, homeowners need to be accommodated, and then we find out exactly what is the estimated amount," he said. "Then we will decide whether we're able to afford everybody, and if not, then there's got to be a guideline or a system moving forward."

Torres also referred to earlier concerns on evictions, following furloughs due to hotels and businesses closing, given that there are no tourists on the island because of the pandemic.

"I remember having issue here when those talks about eviction, those talks about having a law to prevent eviction, but then homeowners are also making an issue that they have mortgages as well. When you have an executive order like this, to help renters, and home owners, that helps our people across the board," he said.

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CNMI GOVERNMENT
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P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-006-20

SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT POWER PLANT BUILDING ROOFING SYSTEM REPLACEMENT

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (Authority) is accepting sealed proposals, subject to the terms and conditions of this Request for Proposal (the "RFP"), and other contract provisions, for the Saipan International Airport Power Plant Building Roofing System Replacement. The Executive Director hereby determines that the use of an Invitation for Bid is neither practical nor advantageous to the Authority because the Authority wishes to acquire services and products that cannot be evaluate by cost alone (NMIAC §40-50-225(a)).

This RFP is issued pursuant to Chapter 40-50 of the Northern Mariana Islands Administrative Code (the "NMIC"). Title 40, including chapter 40-50-225, Request for Proposals, is applicable to the process followed by the RFP.

The RFP Package is available beginning July 24, 2020, at the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport.

All proposals shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Proposal for the Saipan International Airport Power Plant Building Roofing Systems Replacement (RFP-006-20). One (1) original and two (2) copies of the proposal must be submitted no later than ***4:00 p.m. Local Time, August 13, 2020***, to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport. Proposals submitted by facsimile (fax) transmission will not be considered. Any proposals received after the proposal submittal deadline shall be returned to the proposer unopened.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted if sufficient justification exist that awarding the project would not be in the best interest of the CPA.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY.

/s/ ***CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO***
Executive Director

Jury selection in Ataligs' trial enters 3rd day

The jury selection in the trial in federal court of Rota Mayor Efraim M. Atalig and his girlfriend, Evelyn Atalig, enter its third day today, Thursday.

The continuation of the jury selection ended yesterday at about 4:20pm; jury selection today will start at 8am.

There were 16 potential jurors present from one panel. The courtroom deputy reported that out of 32 summoned prospective jurors, nine have been excused by the court. Seven prospective jurors did not appear. U. S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona directed the U.S. Marshal to require the absent ones to appear before the court on Sept. 1 at 3:30pm.

According to the minutes of the trial, 47 potential jurors appeared at the first day of jury selection last Tuesday.

The charges against Efraim and Evelyn Atalig involve at least eight trips taken by the couple at different times in 2018 to Guam, Palau, the U.S. mainland, South Korea, and Saipan.

The Ataligs are being charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and theft from program receiving federal funds, wire fraud, and theft from program receiving federal funds. Both are also charged separately with false statement. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

CHCC pays CUC $2.5M

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muna confirmed that CHCC has already paid half of $2.5 million to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. last July 31 and that CHCC's board of trustees have asked her to set up a meeting with CUC executive director Gary Camacho to discuss other payment arrangements.

"Our [CHCC] board of trustees requested the CUC board that the executive director and I meet. I am waiting for their approval for Gary to meet with us and, we're just waiting for that so that we can discuss other payment arrangements," said Muña.

As for CUC's recommendation that the hospital be disconnected for six hours if they don't pay the $5 million, that is still up in the air, Muña said, but that they've already written to the CUC board and have yet to receive CUC's response.

CUC has given CHCC an ultimatum to pay at least $5 million of the money it owes and CHCC has already paid $2.5 million since receiving the money from the Torres administration.

"We met the $2.5 million. The governor did transfer the money, and we paid that as soon as we received it," said Muna. CHCC has another $2.5 million to go, which will be discussed with Camacho.

Last Nov. 13, Camacho stated that they reached out to CHCC about their utility bill that has now accumulated to $32 million. At the time, Camacho advised CHCC to pay at least $400,000 per month.

As of today, CHCC owes nearly $36 million that keeps growing by about $400,000 per month, according to CUC.

OVER

From Page 1

The teachers who were lifted from furlough status are currently undergoing training for remote learning.

In July, PSS lifted the furlough for registrars because PSS needed them to begin the process for opening up the schools.

A week ago, Ada said, PSS also lifted furlough for its maintenance and janitorial staff members. Ada explained that PSS needed them to start cleaning the campuses and to ensure that all public schools are ready by September.

Ada said that PSS' ultimate goal is to bring all its employees back to work. "Everyone is needed at schools. We do need our truant officers. We do need our teacher aides. They will be informed of the date that they have to come back to report for work," he said.

Back in April, PSS furloughed over 700 employees, including locally funded teachers and support staff members, following a steep decline in CNMI government revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since then PSS has received $23.1 million in Education Stabilization Funds through the federal CARES Act, which they used to bring their employees back before the upcoming school year.

Additionally, Ada said once the new school year begins, it will start off with completely remote learning as principals later determine who will undergo face-to-face instruction.

IPI

From Page 1

Browne also proposes a delay in IPI's payment of $3 million to support the operations of the Commonwealth Casino Commission that IPI must pay by this October. He proposes that the payment be delayed until 30 days before the scheduled reopening of IPI's casino in Garapan.

Browne's letter was also addressed to Attorney General Edward Manibusan, CNMI Lottery Commission chair Mark O. Rabauliman, and Commonwealth Casino Commission acting executive director Andrew Yeom.

Citing the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to grip the world, Browne described what is happening as a classic example of "force majeure" that affects not just IPI and is beyond its control.

The CEO noted that relief is provided for in the Casino License Agreement in cases of "force majeure."

Citing Section 25 of the Casino License Agreement, and because of the worldwide pandemic, Browne said that IPI is asking for an abatement of the casino license fee for the year 2020.

Section 25 of the Casino License Agreement states that the "licensee shall not be in default for any failure or delay in the performance due under this License Agreement if such failure or delay is due to causes beyond reasonable control, including, but not limited to: Act(s) of God, war(s), strike(s) or labor dispute(s), embargo(es), act(s) of terrorism, fire(s), flood(s), or accident(s) without the fault or negligence of the Licensee ("Fore Majeure Event").

The section also states that "invocation of force majeure by the Licensee shall not excuse any payment obligations to the Commonwealth where the grounds and or purpose for such payments have already accrued."

Browne said what IPI is requesting is not unheard of in the U.S. which is almost completely shut down by the pandemic.

"Not only has the federal government provided the airlines relief from certain taxes and fees but has also given the airlines tens of millions of dollars in direct aid so that they would not permanently close," he said.

The CEO pointed out that IPI is only asking for relief from certain fees. Browne said IPI understands that the Legislature may be required to approve the relief that IPI seeks.

"IPI requests your support in providing it relief from the fees," Brown told Torres and other government officials.

With this relief, he said, IPI will be able to stay in business and reopen stronger. "In the long term, providing this relief to IPI now will benefit both IPI and the CNMI," he said.

Browne pointed out flights from China to the CNMI were stopped in February 2020. In March 2020, he said, IPI had to close its casino to protect its employees and the public from the virus. He said IPI has had no income for the last five months. In all likelihood, Browne said, IPI will remain closed, and have no income, for the next eight months.

The CEO cited the many expenses that IPI is required to pay its workers and significant operating costs each month.

At the Commonwealth Casino Commission's monthly board meeting last July 30, CCC board chair Edward Deleon Guerrero reminded Browne that Aug. 12—or 13 days from that day—is the deadline for IPI to pay the $15.5 million casino license fee.

"I'm advising you, you have 13 days to notify the [corporation] that the $15.5 million is due on or before Aug. 12. Please don't come to us on Aug. 11, saying that it's been wired on Aug 11," Deleon Guerrero said.

Deleon Guerrero said IPI had been sanctioned before for $25,000 a day by CCC for late payment. "Please do whatever you can. This is non-negotiable. This is the law," Deleon Guerrero told Browne.

Browne said at that time that the license fee has been one of the top issues they've discussed every day and assured that they are in constant communication with corporate officials.

PIC

From Page 1

According to Warren Villagomez, who chairs the task force, PIC rooms were rented only for overnight last Aug. 10 and the passengers—all of them returning residents—were released Aug. 11. Villagomez said there were no contracts for the PIC rental since it was just an overnight stay for the passengers.

"There was no contract as it's just basically room rental. …It was just basically renting rooms for a number of passengers that came in. It was not a detailed contract where we're renting the entire PIC; it was just basically room rental contract," he said.

In a separate radio briefing last Aug. 11, Villagomez said they were able to obtain the services of PIC by just doing a "request for proposal" or RFP.

"We were able to do an RFP, as guided by the Attorney General and CNMI [Office of] Procurement [and Supply]…to meet the inbound requirement and procedure. …PIC was able to accommodate us for the Jeju flight," said Villagomez.

Esther Muña, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s chief executive officer, said the passengers who were on the Jeju Airlines flight that came in from South Korea were returning residents.

Since South Korea is considered a low-risk country, those passengers were able to do home-quarantine after being able to present the proper documents, Villagomez said. Those who came in without proper documents, such as a polymerase chain reaction test, were transferred to Kanoa Resort or Marianas Resort & Spa.

The returning residents who came in on the Jeju flight did not have to pay for anything, Muña said.

COVID-19 in Guam

A total of 15 new cases of COVID-19 were confirmed yesterday. Four cases were identified through contact tracing. Two cases reported recent travel from the continental United States and were identified in a quarantine facility.

To date, there have been a total of 449 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Guam, with five deaths, 341 released from isolation, and 103 active cases. Of those cases, 398 are classified as civilians and 51 are military service members.

On Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2020, the Guam Department of Education was notified that an employee at Simon Sanchez High School tested positive for COVID-19. The contact tracing effort is ongoing. Beginning today, Aug. 13, 2020, Simon Sanchez High School will fully close for the remainder of this week. The school is expected to reopen by the first day of classes on Monday, August 17, 2020.

USCIS

From Page 1

employment authorization, if applicable) without interruption through Dec. 31, 2020, or the date that USCIS makes a final decision on the parolee's Form I955 and Form I-765, whichever is earlier.

The CNMI long-term resident status was created by the Northern Mariana Islands Long-Term Legal Residents Relief Act (Public Law 116-24), signed into law on June 25, 2019. The new law specifically gave the Department of Homeland Security the discretion to authorize parole, with work authorization, for these aliens during the time period needed to implement the new law. USCIS previously extended parole until Aug. 17, in order to ensure that eligible aliens, including parolees who were granted parole under the previous CNMI categorical parole program, had the full opportunity to apply for CNMI long-term resident status without interruption to their parole status.

For eligible parolees whose timely filed Form I-955 and Form I-765 remain pending on Aug. 17, and who have an Employment Authorization Document, if applicable, expiring on or before Aug. 17, the following documentation will serve as evidence of identity and work authorization for Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, purposes until Dec. 31 (or the date that USCIS makes a final decision on their long-term resident status application, whichever is earlier):

- A copy of this web alert;
- Form I-766, Employment Authorization Document, bearing category code "C-11" with an expiration date on or before June 29, 2020; and
- Evidence that the alien filed Form I-955 and Form I-765 on or before Aug. 17. This may be a copy of Form I-797C, Notice of Action, reflecting that the parolee has filed Form I765 requesting the classification ("class") code of (c)(37), or if unavailable, a copy of the alien's Form I-955 and Form I-765 with a mail receipt.

Eligible aliens had 180 days to apply for CNMI long-term resident status. USCIS announced the Aug. 17 deadline when it opened the application period on Feb. 19. USCIS will not accept any new applications for CNMI long-term resident status postmarked after Aug. 17.

USCIS recommends that each applicant who is 14 years of age or older obtain a letter from the CNMI Superior Court that describes any criminal history the alien might have (or lack thereof). Although this information is not required to file Form I-955 and applicants should not delay the filing of any Form I-955, USCIS suggests this information be included with a timely filed Form I-955 to potentially reduce the time it takes for USCIS to make a final decision.

If a parolee does not file Form I-955 and Form I-765 on or before Aug. 17, their parole will end on Aug. 17, and they must depart the CNMI. If USCIS denies their Form I-955 and Form I-765, their parole status (and employment authorization, if applicable) will end and they must depart the CNMI. ***(USCIS)***

CNMI awarded $2.5M in technical assistance grants

The Trump administration has awarded $2.58 million in fiscal year 2020 grant funding to support the CNMI through the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs' Technical Assistance Program. Funds will be used to strengthen firefighting capacity, bolster law enforcement, fund a prevailing wage study, and generally support government operations and public services on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota in the CNMI.

"[Interior Secretary David L. Bernhardt] and I are pleased to support the CNMI with funds that will help a wide variety of public services, ranging from firefighting and law enforcement, to mammogram services for women, cultural and natural resource protection, and replacing typhoon-damaged trees in the territory," said Interior Assistant Secretary, Insular and International Affairs, Douglas W. Domenech. "Through the annual funding support that we receive from Congress every year, OIA is able to support the CNMI and all the insular areas in ways that a measurable difference in people's lives."

The CNMI government will receive $2,571,650 in fiscal year 2020 Technical Assistance Program grant funding as detailed below.

■ **CNMI Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services – $623,563** will be awarded to train firefighters and to acquire breathing apparatus equipment and supplies.

❑ $507,493 will be used to train six cadets each from Saipan, Tinian, and Rota and through the *Cadet Employment & Resiliency Program*, make them full-time DFEMS firefighting personnel.

❑ $116,070 will be used to acquire a self-contained breathing apparatus compressor and filling station with related equipment for DFEMS. The SCBA station will be used to refill breathing apparatus cylinders and provide an uninterrupted supply of quality, clean, and breathable air for fire ground operations, hazardous material incidents, and rescue operations on Saipan.

■ **CNMI Department of Public Safety - $430,828** will be used to fund a Community Oriented Policing Project intended to increase the capacity of local law enforcement through the employment of new cadets or the rehiring of retired/former police officers. The department hopes to increase the ranks of new officers, school resource officers, and patrol officers to strengthen public safety.

■ **Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. - $334,360** will be used to train the CHCC Radiology Department team and upgrade outdated diagnostic imaging equipment with a full field digital mammography system with tomosynthesis, meeting requirements of the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The CNMI is the only American College of Radiology accredited, and FDA-MQSA2 certified mammography facility, administering approximately 80 mammograms monthly, and approximately 950 exams yearly. Funds will also cover shipping, software, and required licensing.

■ **Saipan Mayor's Office - $232,706** will be used to bolster diminished staff as a result of recent budget cuts and declining public revenue. Funds will help fund staff positions in the mayor's office necessary for maintaining cleanliness and upkeep of roadsides and public areas in local communities.

Domenech

■ **Marianas Visitors Authority - $202,598** will be used to purchase new hardware and software necessary to update and improve existing arrivals data collection and processing methods at the Marianas Visitors Authority. The MVA is working closely with the CNMI Department of Finance, Division of Customs Service, and other partners to ensure more efficient and robust visitor data collection and analysis. The MVA typically processes a range of 41,000 to 50,000 visitor arrival forms each month, depending on the season. The upgrade will enable the territory to improve data processing and analysis, providing better insight for employee hiring, product development, and delivery to improve the visitor experience in the CNMI.

■ **Commonwealth Zoning Board - $153,605** will be used to enhance the administration and management of land use by digitizing and automating zoning operations. Updating the technological and zoning capacity of the office will be critical to support local commercial, and private land-use zoning needs throughout the territory, especially following natural disasters. Funding will also be used for equipment, travel, and geographic information system licensing.

■ **CNMI Department of Commerce, Statistical Division - $146,826** will be used to conduct a prevailing wage study. The study will help determine the types of occupations that exist and measure occupation-specific wage rates for each of the identified occupations, which is required to comply with the CNMI Workforce Act or Public Law 115-218. The study will also provide federal officials with statistical data on the latest industry and wage information of all occupations in the CNMI economy, which are necessary for reviewing and making determinations on CW-1 visa requests, and H-1B and H-2B labor certification applications.

■ **Rota Department of Community and Cultural Affairs - $101,613** will be used for the Rota Historical Sites Maintenance and Improvement Project established to safeguard Rota's historical sites such as ancient Chamorro village sites, a latte stone quarry, a cave with pictographs, and World War II historical sites located throughout the northern and southern part of Rota. Funds will be used to secure and enhance selected cultural and historical sites by installing perimeter fencing and providing corrosion-resistant interpretive signage, translated into several languages for tourists. Eleven of the sites identified for protection are on the National Register of Historic Places.

■ **CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources - $120,117** will be used to fund an invasive species coordinator position in the CNMI and to fund a tree-planting and beatification project along two of Saipan's main roads.

❑ $96,793 will be used to fund the position of an invasive species coordinator to carry-out and implement the CNMI Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan. The goal is to prevent the introduction of new invasive species into and throughout the islands and to mitigate those that have already established themselves in the CNMI. Funding is limited to one year.

❑ $23,324 will be used for equipment and supplies necessary to propagate and replace the iconic Flame trees (*Delonix regia*), that once lined Beach Road and Airport Road, but were destroyed during Super Typhoon Yutu in 2018. This iconic tree is celebrated every year during the eponymous Flame Tree Festival, an annual tourist attraction. It will be replanted along with the Moluccan ironwood (*Intsia bijuga*), known locally as *Trongkon Ifit*, and of important use locally in preventing erosion, woodcarving, canoe building, and home construction.

■ **CNMI Department of Public Works - $79,015** will be used to acquire hardware and software necessary to provide advanced technological support for architectural and engineering projects and services in Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, all three islands in the CNMI.

■ **CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation - $77,745** will be used to train personnel in OVR to become specialists and experts in Social Security Administration retirements and benefit planning. Training will include professional standards and code of conduct, effective communication, Social Security Administration benefits, and related regulations governing retirement planning, employment, and eligibility for benefits.

■ **Tinian Mayor's Office - $68,674** will be used to repair, revitalize, and replace obsolete and condemned playground equipment at the Tinian Children's Park. Funding will be used to purchase maintenance equipment, playground equipment, perimeter fencing for security, and related supplies.

The OIA Technical Assistance Program is made available each year by Congress to support priorities in the U.S. territories and the freely associated states. For more information on grant assistance provided through OIA, please visit: https://www.doi.gov/oia/financial-assistance. ***(PR)***

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW20-ITB-019

SUBMISSION DATE: September 9, 2020 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Removal and Replacement of Road Signs and Traffic Control Devices, Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **August 25, 2020**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works, Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **September 2, 2020** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

/S/ VIRGINIA C. VILLAGOMEZ
Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR)

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW20-ITB-020

SUBMISSION DATE: August 28, 2020 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Renovation of Government House No. 1343 Capitol Hill, Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **August 18, 2020**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the **Project Site Government House No. 1343**, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **August 24, 2020** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ ROBERT H. HUNTER
ACTING SECRETARY OF DCCA

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW20-ITB-022

SUBMISSION DATE: October 15, 2020 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Route 36 (Windward/Chalan Kalabera) Road Improvements Project No. CM-NH-0036 (004), Phase 1, Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **August 13, 2020** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

There will be a Pre-bid Conference for this project on **September 2, 2020**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **September 24, 2020** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

PSS lowers budget request to $28M

The Public School System is asking for a significantly lower budget proposal than its original $40 million, slashing it down to just $28 million.

During the PSS budget hearing last Tuesday by the Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs at the CNMI Senate, Board of Education chair Janice Tenorio said they opted to request a mere $28 million instead of $40 million in order for other agencies not to suffer.

Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada said PSS operated with just $20 million last school year, so $28 million is a practical amount. "We know that last year we were operating at $20 million. Well, we had $36 million but then it was re-appropriated down to $20 million so that really hurt us and we came unprepared and that caused the payless paydays and which resulted in furloughs. Lesson learned. We do not want to go through that again so, to be on the safe side, we will be realistic, more practical," Ada said.

At $28 million, PSS will still be hurting, with employees at 64 hours and working four days a week but Ada said that nobody will be furloughed, and nobody gets a payless payday. "For now, given the situation, I'm satisfied," he added.

Technically, however, PSS operated this school year at less than $20 million in local funds and is still waiting for the remaining $2 million that is being eyed for use to prepare for the opening of the new school year in September.

"We are waiting for $2 million until Sept. 30. We're here pleading for it and I think we're going to get that $2 million. We need that money. That will help us with payroll and opening of the schools," he said.

Ada said PSS needs that remaining $2 million because it is extremely costly to prepare for the upcoming school year, given the new safety measures that will be put in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Just getting the fire extinguisher, inspection of the water, and all that stuff at the school level is very costly. Especially now with deep sanitizing, it's around $228 per classroom and there are 30 classrooms in each campus. That's over $6,000 per school. That's just a 'guesstimate' because some schools have up to 45 classrooms," he said.

Ada said once the school year begins on Sept. 8, it will start off with completely remote learning as principals determine who will undergo face-to-face instruction. ***(Kimberly Bautista)***

Apartment owner sues IPI

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A corporation is suing Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC in federal court to claim a payment of $180,000 for allegedly breaching their lease agreement by failing to pay any rent for 20 apartment units and destroying or taking furniture, fixtures, and other property belonging to the corporation when it vacated the premises.

Red Coral Corp. asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to enforce the parties' arbitration agreement and compel IPI to cooperate.

As of press time yesterday, *Saipan Tribune* was still waiting for comments from IPI.

Red Coral counsel Colin M. Thompson said their lease agreement contains an arbitration clause requiring either party to arbitrate their disputes arising from the lease. Thompson said Red Coral has sent several demand letters as well as a demand to arbitrate, but IPI has not responded. Without cooperation from IPI, the lawyer said, Red Coral cannot arbitrate its dispute as it is required to do under the lease agreement.

According to the complaint, Red Coral and IPI executed a lease agreement on July 15, 2016, where Red Coral leased 20 apartment units to IPI for a term of three years ending on Sept. 1, 2019. Thompson said the lease mandated that both IPI and Red Coral arbitrate any disputes arising from the lease.

IPI allegedly failed to pay any rent to Red Coral for the months of January through August 2019.

Thompson said that when Red Coral inspected the apartment units, it was discovered that much of the appliances and other property were either missing or destroyed.

He said IPI's failure to pay rent and repair damage to the premises is a breach of the lease provisions.

Red Coral has claims against IPI in the amount of $180,000, not including interest and cost.

Thompson said due to IPI's actions and failure to cure its breaches of the lease, Red Coral was forced to hire an attorney to assist in the collection efforts.

On Dec. 6, 2019, Red Coral's attorney served IPI with a notice and demand letter outlining Red Coral's damages and demanding payment from IPI for those damages. The lawyer said Red Coral never received a response from IPI.

On June 5, 2020, Red Coral served IPI's attorney of record with another notice of default and demand letter.

Finally, Thompson said, after no response from IPI, on June 23, 2020, Red Coral's attorney sent IPI's attorney of record a final demand for arbitration invoking the arbitration clause of the lease.

He said IPI has not responded to the arbitration demand.

NMC graduate passes NCLEX-RN exam

Keithley Marquez, a 2020 NMC nursing graduate, has joined the list of students who have passed the challenging National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses or NCLEX-RN.

The NCLEX-RN exam is the exam nursing graduates in the CNMI have to pass in order to be able to practice nursing. The exam tests the knowledge, skills, and abilities of nursing graduates in order to certify that they are equipped with the capability to apply entry level nursing practices correctly.

"I wish to congratulate Keithley on becoming the latest graduate to reach this important milestone of passing the NCLEX-RN," said interim NMC president Frankie Eliptico. Along with Marquez, recent NMC graduates Frantz David Clarke, Liqi Huang, and Haram Lee have also passed the NCLEX-RN this year.

"We commend Keithley for this accomplishment and expect to see great things from her as Keithley's educational and professional journey continues," said NMC Nursing Department chair Rosa T. Aldan.

Marquez has always wanted to pursue a career in the medical field. "Being able to give back to my community through my service makes nursing a very rewarding and humbling career," Marquez said.

She added that NMC's nursing program helped her in great detail when preparing for the exam. "Even though my nursing cohort had to finish our last semester in our homes due to COVID-19, I'm truly grateful that our instructors continued to provide NCLEX content reviews via our Zoom sessions," Marquez said. "Those zoom sessions helped me evaluate my strengths and weaknesses and what content I should focus more on when reviewing for the NCLEX."

For more information about NMC's nursing program, email Aldan at rosa.aldan@marianas.edu or schedule a virtual appointment at rosaaldan.youcanbook.me. ***(NMC)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-20-006

Archaeological Services for S19-068 Construction of Island Wide Sewerline Replacement (Lower MIHA) & W19-070 Construction of San Antonio Waterline Replacement

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from Archaeologists or firms that meet the U.S. Department of Interior qualifications (36CFR61) to create a work plan, to prepare information, data and documentation needed to conduct Section 106 Review of the National Historic Preservation Act for FY19 for the construction of a sewerline replacement in Lower MIHA & the construction of a waterline replacement in San Antonio, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval of the USEPA.

The projects have been broken down into the following detail:

S19-068 Construction of Island Wide Sewerline Replacement (Lower MIHA) – This project proposes to install approximately 700 linear feet of new 8-inch gravity sewer pipe in order to abandon an existing collapsed sewerline that was installed on private property. The project includes the installation of new manholes and the reconnection of existing sewer service laterals to the new sewer main.

W19-070 Construction of San Antonio Waterline Replacement – The project aims to upgrade and replace the existing ACP distribution main in San Antonio Village. This project will install about 2.1 miles of new 6-inch distribution main and .50 miles of 4-inch distribution main. The project will also include the replacement of all fire hydrants, gate valves, relocation and reconnection of existing service laterals, installation of new flush hydrants, air release valves, and asphalt road restoration.

The scope of Archaeological Services will include, but not be limited to:

1. Conducting the necessary research and fieldwork that represents a reasonable and good faith effort to identify historic properties, to include archaeological resources, as set out in the regulations 36 CFR § 800.4(b)(1):
   a. Background research design and work plan;
   b. Archival background information;
   c. Sample field investigation, and field survey;
   d. Past planning, research and studies;
   e. The magnitude and nature of the undertaking;
   f. The degree of federal involvement;
   g. The nature and extent of potential effects on historic properties within the APE;
   h. The likely nature, identification and location of historic properties within the APE; and,
   i. Create a mitigation plan to resolve adverse effects.

2. Preparation of the necessary reports and letters for submittal to various federal and local resource agencies to address environmental requirements of Section 106 to completely secure concurrence for the projects ready for construction.

3. Deliverables
   a. 2 copies of the final report for review and approval to HPO and CUC, and
   b. Map showing the location of identified historic properties which would assist with alignment of the new waterline and sewerline to avoid such properties.

The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one RFP package set.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the PROPOSAL must be submitted in a SEALED ENVELOPE marked *"CUC-RFP-20-006: Archaeological Services For Construction of Island Wide Sewerline Replacement (Lower MIHA) & Construction of San Antonio Waterline Replacement"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **August 14, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the RFP requirements in the course of proposer's preparation of the RFP under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RFP under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RFP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on July 27, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, Water/Wastewater Engineer, via email address nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said RFP, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-20-007

Archaeological Services forS19-069 Construction of Afetna Sewer Collection Upgrade

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from Archaeologists or firms that meet the U.S. Department of Interior qualifications (36CFR61) to create a work plan, to prepare information, data and documentation needed to conduct Section 106 Review of the National Historic Preservation Act for FY19 for the construction of a new sewerline in Afetna Village, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval of the USEPA.

The existing Afetna sewer system was privately built and poorly installed due to excessive buildup of the Garment Industry. The project aims to replace the old system with approximately 5000 linear feet of new gravity sewer main with new sewer laterals and the installation of sewer manholes.

The scope of Archaeological Services will include, but not be limited to:

1. Conducting the necessary research and fieldwork that represents a reasonable and good faith effort to identify historic properties, to include archaeological resources, as set out in the regulations 36 CFR § 800.4(b)(1):
   a. Background research design and work plan;
   b. Archival background information;
   c. Sample field investigation, and field survey;
   d. Past planning, research and studies;
   e. The magnitude and nature of the undertaking;
   f. The degree of federal involvement;
   g. The nature and extent of potential effects on historic properties within the APE;
   h. The likely nature, identification and location of historic properties within the APE; and,
   i. Create a mitigation plan to resolve adverse effects.

2. Preparation of the necessary reports and letters for submittal to various federal and local resource agencies to address environmental requirements of Section 106 to completely secure concurrence for the projects ready for construction.

3. Deliverables
   a. 2 copies of the final report for review and approval to HPO and CUC, and
   b. Map showing the location of identified historic properties which would assist with alignment of the sewerline to avoid such properties.

The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one RFP package set.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-RFP-20-007: Archaeological Services for S-19-069 Construction of Afetna Sewer Collection Upgrade"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **August 14, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the RFP requirements in the course of proposer's preparation of the RFP under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RFP under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RFP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on July 27, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, Water/Wastewater Engineer, via email address nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said RFP, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Island Snapshots

SUBSISTENCE FARMING

About 20 children, the youngest of whom is 4 years old, are taught the rudiments of planting banana stalks during the resumption of the Carolinian Affairs Office's Tepengi Kkosch Refaluwasch/Caring for our Carolinian Culture program last week.

IVA MAURIN

The program, made possible through a grant from the Administration for Native Americans, fosters youth development through traditional cultural activities for the children through cultural summer programs and classes for youth and adults.

IVA MAURIN

Carolinian Affairs Office executive director John Tagabuel teach the children about fruits, parts of a plant, and key words for planting, and their local terms.

IVA MAURIN

Program participants also learn how to plant tapioca.

IVA MAURIN

Program participants learn how to plant banana stalks.

IVA MAURIN

PATHWAY CLEANUP

Some 150 TanHoldings employees pose with the bags of trash collected after a corporate-wide cleanup last Friday along the Gov. Froilan Tenorio Beach Road Pathway.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A group of TanHoldings employees are ferried to the midway point of the Beach Road Pathway, so that they could cover the entire stretch of the pathway.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TanHoldings employees filled a total of 150 trash bags and a truckload of fallen debris during the corporate-wide cleanup last Friday along the Gov. Froilan Tenorio Beach Road Pathway.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The cleanup last Friday started at the Oleai Pavilion and finished at the pavilion across the JP Center in Garapan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Some TanHoldings employees pose for a souvenir picture after registering for the cleanup.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

US must unite to fight foreign attacks on the 2020 election

Russia, China and Iran are targeting the 2020 election, according to U.S. intelligence agencies. To protect our democracy, America—from the White House to Congress to the tech sector to everyday citizens—should unite as it would against any external attack.

First, however, a successful defense requires an honest acknowledgment of the motivation and methods of the aggressors. Partisanship should not blur the distinctions in a recent statement from William R. Evanina, director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center.

Yes, Russia prefers President Donald Trump while China prefers Joe Biden. But the extent of their efforts is different.

"We assess that China prefers that President Trump—whom Beijing sees as unpredictable—does not win re-election," Evanina said. "China has been expanding its influence efforts ahead of November 2020 to shape the policy environment in the United States, pressure political figures it views as opposed to China's interests, and deflect and counter criticism of China. Although China will continue to weigh the risks and benefits of aggressive action, its public rhetoric over the past few months has grown increasingly critical of the current Administration's COVID-19 response, closure of China's Houston Consulate, and actions on other issues."

Notably, Evanina said that China is channeling its activity mostly in "public rhetoric" of Trump's policies while it still weighs the "risk and benefits of aggressive action," while Russia is already "using a range of measures to primarily denigrate former Vice President Biden and what it sees as an anti-Russia 'establishment.' This is consistent with Moscow's public criticism of him when he was Vice President for his role in the Obama administration's policies on Ukraine and its support for the anti-Putin opposition inside Russia."

In one specific example cited by Evanina, "pro-Russia Ukrainian parliamentarian Andriy Derkach is spreading claims about corruption—including through publicizing leaked phone calls—to undermine former Vice President Biden's candidacy and the Democratic Party."

The potential weaponizing of pro-Kremlin parliamentarians from Ukraine reflects how reckless the efforts to investigate Biden's son Hunter for his work for Ukrainian energy firm Burisma are. These efforts are led by Wisconsin Republican Sen. Ron Johnson, who, along with some like-minded colleagues, risks complicity in the Kremlin's quest to "denigrate" Biden and the "anti-Russian establishment." That "establishment" should be bipartisan after Russia's 2016 election attack, which according to a consensus report from U.S. intelligence agencies was on behalf of Trump.

On Sunday, national security adviser Robert O'Brien went further than Evanina regarding China, claiming that

See US on Next Page

Protesters? Sorry, they look like thieves to me

By CLARENCE PAGE
Chicago Tribune

Clarence Page is a member of the Chicago Tribune Editorial Board. Readers may send him email at cpage@tribune.com.

As shopkeepers and volunteers were sweeping up Monday after an overnight looting rampage through downtown Chicago's ritziest addresses, I already was hearing from taunting emailers like this passive-aggressive troll:

"Can't wait to see how you spin the blame for this on Trump, the police or white privilege," wrote a gentleman from Kansasville, Wisconsin. "Unless you choose to conveniently ignore it as you are wont to do with the ongoing, self-induced carnage in Chicago's Black communities."

Thanks. That was helpful. Not.

My reader was referring to the hours of looting and destruction early Monday when more than 100 people were arrested and 13 police officers injured, police said. Streets were littered with broken glass and items stripped from shelves and racks in the city's upscale upper Michigan Avenue shopping district and other areas of the city.

"This was straight-up felony criminal conduct," said Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot. "This was an assault on our city."

True enough. As a longtime Chicagoan, old enough to remember the riots of the 1960s, the "city on the brink" 1980s, followed by about 30 years of gentrification, I felt nothing short of dismay at the bad news: Here we go again.

When I hear from grumpy suburban and rural wags who echo President Donald Trump in bashing "liberal" urban dwellers, I question whether they really want honest dialogue or just want to show off their racial innocence—and vent.

Yet I share with my passive-aggressive reader a frustration with hotblooded extremists who somehow got the wrong message from Martin Luther King Jr.'s observation back in 1966 that "a riot is the language of the unheard."

On Monday evening, peaceful protesters organized by Black Lives Matter Chicago held up a banner outside the Central District station that, in my view, showed how far the young BLM movement has drifted away from the passive resistance of King.

"Our futures have been looted from us," the banner urged. "Loot back."

No, please don't.

"There's no such thing as a bad protester," organizer Ariel Atkins told reporters.

"Also, (we're) demanding that police be defunded. Police should not be here. They should not exist, especially because we're giving them all this money to beat and terrorize us. We're giving them all this money when it's like we're in an actual pandemic and people need care right now, but you're giving them police.

"We don't need police," she said. "We need care."

OK, yes, we do have too many inequities in law and household income—bigger gaps between rich and poor than we had in King's day. But, as King also would point out, there's a right way and a wrong way to get there.

Today's BLM movement sounded a lot like the Black Panthers of a half-century ago, when their 10-Point Program called in 1966 for the release of "all Black men" in American jails and prisons because they had not been tried by "juries of their peers."

Yet, time is an educator. As Richard Pryor exclaimed on his "Live on the Sunset Strip" album after his first visit to a real penitentiary, "Thank God we got penitentiaries!"

"I asked a dude—I said, 'Why did you kill everybody in the house?' Pryor recalls. "The guy said, 'They was home!'"

Yet, as I have written many times, we still over-incarcerate nonviolent offenders, particularly Black men, and suspects who are too poor to make bail.

Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx was elected handily in the wake of a long history of police scandals that included torture, cover-ups and federal findings of racial bias.

Now she's on the hot seat after a Chicago Tribune analysis finds she may have been too lenient in dropping charges against suspects at a higher rate than her predecessor, whom she defeated. Police Superintendent David Brown's remarks that the looters were "emboldened by no consequences in the criminal system" sounded like a veiled jab at Foxx, who is up for reelection in November.

There are a lot of fingers being pointed in all directions after Monday's mayhem. The buck inevitably stops with Lightfoot, but there is plenty of blame to go around during this hot summer in which protesters sometimes look just like plain old looters.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

How to improve distance learning for our youngest students

By BENJAMIN COTTINGHAM and ALIX GALLAGHER
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Many teachers, students and their families can agree on one thing after experiencing the unexpected hurricane that was distance learning this spring: It must improve—especially in the earliest grades, transitional kindergarten through second grade.

Our youngest students, from ages 4 to 9, need more supervision throughout the day and help with the technology that enables learning. They are developmentally different from their older peers in ways that significantly impact how they best learn. Distance-learning practices must reflect that reality.

As educational researchers, we learned from conversations with teachers, school leaders, parents and early-education experts what strategies were effective for initiating and sustaining student engagement in the spring. Anyone responsible for supporting young students in distance learning could benefit from employing these approaches.

Obviously, distance instruction is not the same as in-person instruction and should not look the same. Sure, some strategies can transfer to a distance classroom, but forcing distance learning to look like "normal" school is trying to put a square peg in a round hole and will only hurt our youngest students.

California requires at least 180 minutes of instructional time a day for kindergarten students and 230 minutes for grades one through three. Setting this expectation is critical for ensuring students receive daily interaction with teachers and their peers. However, many districts, including Los Angeles Unified, have struggled with determining how much instruction should be given through live, uninterrupted video streams. LAUSD is giving teachers broad leeway on that front.

Even adults have trouble videoconferencing for long stretches. For the youngest students, it is nearly impossible.

It's an ineffective strategy for younger students for an obvious reason—they have shorter attention spans. But the livestream approach also emphasizes the quantity of instruction without giving enough attention to quality.

In a traditional classroom, young students spend significant amounts of time learning in small groups with peers rather than with the whole class, so that teachers can provide individualized feedback, more easily conduct lessons, and intentionally facilitate social interactions between students. Distance classrooms should mirror this approach.

Live instruction in distance classrooms should be structured around short interactive lessons, with synchronous learning opportunities—where students learn together at the same time—broken into smaller chunks throughout the day. Teachers should have multiple opportunities to interact with students one-on-one and in smaller groups, and they should make it a priority to use learning activities that allow students to work together.

Play is essential for learning and key to young students' development of interpersonal skills, as well as their social emotional well-being. There are many creative ways teachers can reach beyond the computer screen to facilitate play.

Games such as "Simon Says" help build executive-functioning skills and provide an opportunity for energetic young students to move. Technology can be used to facilitate play and engagement between students through various education applications and games. Teachers can also use interactions similar to "carpet time" to foster engagement where students interact with materials or items individually and share their creations with their teacher and classmates.

And as families know all too well, young students need ongoing adult engagement to guide their distance learning. To support parents, schools and districts such as San Francisco Unified are partnering with community organizations that traditionally support students to provide learning spaces and trained staff to help students to safely complete distance learning lessons. And teachers only have so much time, so maintaining regular contact with student families should not just fall to them—counselors and non-instructional staff should help out.

In the spring, some teachers created flexible lessons that families could adapt to the time and resources available to them. Providing students and parents with options for different activities drives engagement while being responsive to family needs. Regular check-ins with a student's family should serve as a troubleshooting opportunity, whether it's about the academics or the family's well-being.

In addition, lessons focused on topics important to students' families can also help bring culturally relevant instruction to the fore.

Teachers should provide alternatives to student learning as a group by offering at-home work that can be completed on their own or away from the computer. These might include online literacy, numeracy and math, and science lessons as well as such activities as guided reading in any language or building math skills through daily activities such as cooking or telling time.

Just as in a brick-and-mortar classroom, young students should be encouraged to display their mastery of new concepts, which could be accomplished through apps, verbal sharing and small-group conversations.

In the spring, many schools and districts did not do a good enough job communicating expectations to parents. Teachers and schools need to make sure families and students understand their roles in making distance learning work. A clear schedule should be provided that establishes the time, for example, for whole-class morning meetings, guided readings, the teacher's office hours, and the blocks of time for instruction.

Improving distance education in ways that support student learning this fall will require meaningful changes in practice and tighter collaboration between schools and families. Distance education is here for the foreseeable future. We need to get better at it.

Benjamin Cottingham and Alix Gallagher are educational researchers at Policy Analysis for California Education.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A couple of ideas

Reading the paper brings back many fond memories of how our community leaders used to react to matters of public interest in comparison to how they are handled today.

1. Keeping the villages clean and orderly. For instance, before, each quarter the mayor of Saipan, with the help of the village commissioners, would conduct a "village inspection," where each village is rated by a point system on the cleanliness of villages and the respective village commissioner would receive a reward from the Mayor's Office.

Perhaps each of our respective precinct might consider doing an identical system. Either the Chamber of Commerce or similar organization might wish to take on the responsibility to provide the certificate of award and let the mayor of Saipan give the certificates the first, second, and third-place winners.

Member of our Legislature might wish to take on the program to ensure that each of our precinct be involved in the precinct cleaning program.

2. We badly need to develop an Agricultural Development Program.

During the military government days, bulldozers and tractors were made available to help farmers venture into an agriculture program. The equipment was owned by the military government and the rental of the equipment was negligible. We should look into the possibility of "re-venturing" into this program so we can assist farmers in agricultural development. I am aware that Japan buys tons of agricultural goods from islands to the south of us. I learn that Japan will buy all the *chirimen kabocha* we can produce. The demand is especially true during fall and winter seasons.

I am merely sharing my own ideas in hope that the powers-that-be will take on the task and develop our agricultural economy.

David M. Sablan Sr.
Papago, Saipan

US

From Page 8

Beijing was "absolutely trying to access secretary of state websites" in order to "see the president lose." Whether this is factual or an attempt to amplify the administration's get-tough policies on China is uncertain.

Those kinds of allegations call for more transparency from the administration. A declassification of the intelligence assessment on the threat from the three countries would also benefit citizens and Silicon Valley, which must play its role in resisting disinformation disseminated by Moscow, Beijing, Tehran or elsewhere.

Interference in our elections should be acknowledged for what it is—an attack on the DNA of our democratic way of life.

(c) 2020 *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis)

Tragic Trumpty Tweeter Tales

Readers take note: All fictional folks who turned in reports and grades for this doggerel were told no "F" grades would be accepted. D minus would be the lowest grade for the record. With these guidelines Donald scored "perfect" D-minus grades all the way down. This poem was inspired by Steve Schmidt, member of the Lincoln Project, and TV commentator who recently described POTUS 45 in a TV interview as "…deplorable, despicable, and disgraceful."

Donald's D-Minus Report Card
Double trouble double down sonnets on it

Donald's double down disease delivers dirt daily
dependent on family money he declares independence
deferential to himself he is indifferent to others
dedicated follower of himself; dedication to no other
demagogue deluxe—an angry augury of demagoguery
deaf to reason, deaf and dumb to compromise or pleasing
demands loyalty pledges, pledges nothing to his staff
dejected by any opposition; dejected when rejected
despicable Donald, conspicuous and crass consumption
despite reasonable advice fires reasonable thinkers
deposits his emolument money in Deutsche Bank
decimates those who 'dis' his form of democracy
deplorable remarks on Sen. John McCain and women
devolution of democracy, plutocratic partisan personified
denigrates anyone who crosses him in any way
dethroned Dr. Fauci and others more popular than him
disgraceful embarrassing behavior with world leaders
determined to ruin respect for the US presidency
devours fast food facts; the US Constitution not so fast
disturbed and disturbing affect demonstrated daily
decisions made off the top of his head, no discussions
destroys careers of loyal lifelong civil servants
destruction of Pres. Obama's legacy a major goal
damn foolish tweets and frequent grammatical errors
Denier! Holds both the Duke and Dean of Denial title
determination full speed ahead for environmental folly
deadbeat on years of tax returns and plenty promises
desperately needs a deus ex machina with protestors.

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

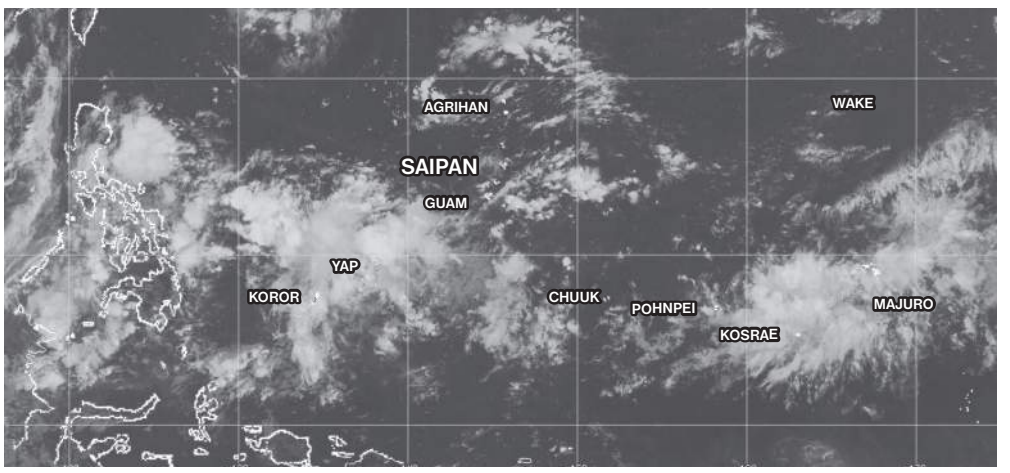
Joey "Pepe Batbon" Connolly is a retired teacher and has been named a poet laureate of Tinian. He has taught English in CNMI public schools for the past 30 years. He has also taught in Alaska, New Orleans, and Las Vegas.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northwest winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. North winds 5 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers, except partly sunny with a chance of showers and thunderstorms each afternoon.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers, except partly sunny with a chance of showers and thunderstorms each afternoon.
88º 78º	89º 79º	86º 77º	88º 79º	88º 79º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:25 AM, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Andersen Air Force Base Doppler weather radar shows isolated showers moving through the Marianas waters this morning, mainly south of Guam. An upper-level low near 20N and 144E is having less effect on the Marianas. It is still creating some thunderstorms near Agrihan and Pagan. The buoys reveal combined seas of 3 to 4 feet, composed primarily of east-northeast trade-wind swell with a bit of southeast swell energy added.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	84° / 81°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Pohnpei	Showers	85° / 77°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	87° / 80°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	84° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:02 AM	6:41 PM
Friday	6:02 AM	6:40 PM
Saturday	6:02 AM	6:40 PM
Sunday	6:02 AM	6:39 PM
Monday	6:02 AM	6:39 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	12:26 AM	1:32 PM	-
Friday	1:10 AM	2:26 PM	-
Saturday	1:58 AM	3:21 PM	-
Sunday	2:52 AM	4:17 PM	-
Monday	3:50 AM	5:13 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	58° / 47°
Beijing	Showers	91° / 71°
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	87° / 81°
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	86° / 74°
London	Thunderstorms	84° / 67°
Los Angeles	Sunny	88° / 71°
Manila	Thunderstorms	88° / 77°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	62° / 51°
Miami	Thunderstorms	88° / 81°
New York	Thunderstorms	85° / 73°
Osaka	Thunderstorms	93° / 82°
Paris	Showers	83° / 67°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	84° / 77°
Rome	Sunny	96° / 72°
Salem	Thunderstorms	90° / 72°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	69° / 55°
Seoul	Thunderstorms	88° / 78°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	94° / 78°
Washington, DC	Thunderstorms	81° / 73°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:26 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.77
9:01 AM	LOW TIDE	0.45
4:20 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.57
8:58 PM	LOW TIDE	1.29

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklist-household-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

FLIGHT SCHEDULE

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				**GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN**			
UA117	7:30am	8:10am	1, 4, 6	UA174	5:50am	6:31am	1, 4, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301.2	8:30AM	9:00AM	Tues/Fri
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Tues/Fri

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101.2	9:30AM	10:00AM	Tues/Fri
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Tues/Fri

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1212	18:00	18:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

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Business

MARK RABAGO
Rendezvous International Cuisine has pivoted to offering *a la carte* items that could very well be the most bang for your buck on island.

Rendezvous reopens with affordable menu

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Rendezvous International Cuisine first opened on March 12. A few days later the island went into semi-lockdown to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Owners Marvin Deocares, Boy Ching, and Leo Canedo, however, are undeterred and reopened the new restaurant atop Saipan Vegas along Beach Road in Chalan Kiya late last month.

Instead of their daily lunch buffet, Rendezvous has pivoted to offering *a la carte* items that could very well be the most bang for your buck on island.

For instance, its steak and lobster combo costs only $32.95 and includes a slab of New York steak and lobster tail served with sauteed mixed vegetables, steamed rice, and iced tea.

Bacon-wrapped fillet mignon ($22.95), lobster tail ($19.95), and ribeye steak ($19.95) are also on the menu along with New York steak and grilled short ribs, which, at $14.95 each, feels like Rendezvous is practically giving them away.

House specialties like savory chicken, *pata tim*, stir fry beef oyster sauce, lechon *kawali*, and spicy buffalo wings are also in the revamped menu and ranges in price from $10.95 to $14.95.

"All come with steamed rice and iced tea for free. You cannot really get a better deal than that," according to Deocares.

Looking for something a bit light? Rendezvous also has you covered with their short order menu that includes Hawaiian poke, butterfly squid, calamari, beef fajita wraps, hot & sour honeycomb tripe, and beef *bagbagis* (crispy deep fried beef intestine), among others.

Rendezvous currently has a bucket beer promo, where you can order five cans or six bottles of domestic beer for just $18.

Deocares admits that the COVID-19 hit their newly opened restaurant hard as they were forced to shutter their doors days after opening. Even when they reopened last month, it was only on the weekends (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday). What sustained them during the lean restart was they were always booked for special events like birthday parties, christenings, and the likes.

"Of course we practiced social distancing but since our venue is so large, it's easy to fit 50 or more people at Rendezvous," said Deocares. Rendezvous has an original seating capacity of 200 people.

To adhere to the government's COVID-19 safety protocols, all Rendezvous staff wear masks and gloves. They also get their temperatures checked before going on duty. For diners, staff also check their temperature and write their names and contact information. Tables and chairs are far apart and directional arrows have also become a norm.

Rendezvous International Cuisine is now open daily for lunch, 11am-2pm, and dinner, 6pm-9pm. For more information and for reservations, call 235-444 or you can also reach Rendezvous through their Facebook page.

MARK RABAGO
Rendezvous' $14.95 New York steak.

MARK RABAGO
Rendezvous' $14.95 savory chicken.

FHB online mortgage portal to transform residential lending application process

HONOLULU—First Hawaiian Bank announced the launch of its new online home loan platform that makes applying for a residential loan convenient, fast and easy. Part of the FHB Digital family of online solutions, the new online home loan application allows current and prospective FHB customers to apply for a new mortgage, a Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC), or refinance a current mortgage through a dynamic and intuitive online portal that asks non-technical questions, making it an efficient, straightforward process. Once the application information is complete, FHB Digital's online platform will help identify the best loan product for each individual applicant.

A unique feature that streamlines the residential loan application process is the ability to assist applicants with gathering supporting materials and third-party documentation necessary to complete the loan application, including income, asset documentation and bank statements. FHB's online solution is a secure and hassle-free service option to applicants.

Available now, FHB Digital's residential lending platform joins the Bank's suite of digital tools, including FHB Online, FHB Mobile Banking, FHB Online Business, and Mobile Deposit which are all available on any mobile device, from anywhere, at any time.

"During this time of historically low mortgage rates, FHB Digital's online portal is a fast and easy way to apply for a home loan," said Tony Au, Executive Vice President and Residential Real Estate Division Manager. "The portal is capable of providing personalized loan options and rates you may qualify for – giving customers the confidence they need to make a smart decision in what can be a daunting process."

Convenient

FHB Digital's online home loan portal is available to customers 24/7, on any device using the internet. Customers can complete the process at any point either online or in the branch. Once initiated, the system will track the user's progress and will allow stop and restart while saving all information. FHB has access to in-progress loan applications and a banker can provide assistance as needed.

Fast

FHB Digital Mortgage gives customers the ability to submit an application in minutes without ever having to step foot inside a branch. Applicants are provided loan options to consider, allowing them to move forward quickly with the loan process. A loan officer is available to assist at any point in the process.

Easy

Customers can simply upload documents directly into FHB's Digital online home portal or they can choose to have documents gathered for them. Employment documentation can be gathered from participating employers and asset documentation can be gathered with the customer's authorization which saves time searching for documents.

FHB Digital's home loan portal is available for customers to use now. For a limited time, First Hawaiian Bank has special discount offers for first-time home buyers and applicants looking to re-finance their current mortgage. For more information, visit fhb.com/digitalhome. ***(PR)***

Virus surge makes US weak link in global economic recovery

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP)—People in China are back to buying German luxury cars. Europe's assembly lines are accelerating. Now the global economy is waiting for the United States to get its coronavirus outbreak under control and boost the recovery, but there's little sign of that.

The United States' fumbling response to the pandemic and its dithering over a new aid package is casting doubt on its economic prospects and making it one of the chief risks to a global rebound.

After springtime restrictions, many U.S. states prematurely declared victory over the virus and began to reopen their economies, leading to a resurgence in COVID-19 cases. Confirmed infections are rising in most states, and many businesses have had to scale back or even cancel plans to reopen. And while it does not dominate global commerce like it did 20 years ago, America is still by far the biggest economy - accounting for 22% of total economic output, versus 14% for No. 2 China, according to the World Bank.

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
27,686.91	3,333.69	10,782.82
−104.53	−26.78	−185.53
.38%	0.80%	1.69%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	1.4047	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7502	Russian Ruble	72.0733
British Pound	0.7668	Indian Rupee	74.4344	Singapore Dollar	1.3743
Canadian Dollar	1.3333	Japanese Yen	106.6530	South Korean Won	1163.86
Chinese Yuan	6.8566	Malaysian Ringgit	4.1654	Swiss Franc	0.9188
Euro	0.8531	New Zealand Dollar	1.5269	Taiwan Dollar	28.9774
		Philippine Peso	48.0973	Thailand Baht	31.1170

Nation

Biden picks Kamala Harris as running mate, first Black woman

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP)—Joe Biden named California Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate, making history by selecting the first Black woman to compete on a major party's presidential ticket and acknowledging the vital role Black voters will play in his bid to defeat President Donald Trump.

In choosing Harris, Biden embraced a former rival from the Democratic primary who is familiar with the unique rigor of a national campaign. The 55-year-old first-term senator, who is also of South Asian descent, is one of the party's most prominent figures. She quickly became a top contender for the No. 2 spot after her own White House campaign ended.

She will appear with Biden for the first time as his running mate at an event Wednesday near his home in Wilmington, Delaware.

In announcing the pick Tuesday, Biden called Harris a "fearless fighter for the little guy, and one of the country's finest public servants." She said Biden would "unify the American people" and "build an America that lives up to our ideals."

Harris joins Biden at a moment of unprecedented national crisis. The coronavirus pandemic has claimed the lives of more than 160,000 people in the U.S., far more than the toll experienced in other countries. Business closures and disruptions resulting from the pandemic have caused severe economic problems. Unrest, meanwhile, has emerged across the country as Americans protest racism and police brutality.

Trump's uneven handling of the crises has given Biden an opening, and he enters the fall campaign in strong position against the president. In adding Harris to the ticket, he can point to her relatively centrist record on issues such as health care and her background in law enforcement in the nation's largest state.

The president told reporters Tuesday he was "a little surprised" that Biden picked Harris, pointing to their debate stage disputes during the primary. Trump, who had donated to her previous campaigns, argued she was "about the most liberal person in the U.S. Senate."

"I would have thought that Biden would have tried to stay away from that a little bit," he said.

Harris's record as California attorney general and district attorney in San Francisco was heavily scrutinized during the Democratic primary and turned away some liberals and younger Black voters who saw her as out of step on issues of racism in the legal system and police brutality. She declared herself a "progressive prosecutor" who backs law enforcement reforms.

AP

In this June 27, 2019, file photo, then-Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., listens to questions after the Democratic primary debate hosted by NBC News at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Art in Miami.

Biden, who spent eight years as President Barack Obama's vice president, has spent months weighing who would fill that same role in his White House. He pledged in March to select a woman as his vice president, easing frustration among Democrats that the presidential race would center on two white men in their 70s.

Biden's search was expansive, including Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a leading progressive; Florida Rep. Val Demings, whose impeachment criticism of Trump won party plaudits; California Rep. Karen Bass, who leads the Congressional Black Caucus; former Obama national security adviser Susan Rice; and Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, whose passionate response to unrest in her city garnered national attention.

What's keeping Washington from a virus deal, explained

WASHINGTON (AP)—Hopes that talks on a huge COVID-19 relief deal would generate an agreement soon are fizzling, with both the Trump administration negotiating team and top congressional Democrats adopting hard lines and testy attitudes.

Now that President Donald Trump has issued a series of executive edicts and the national political conventions are set to begin, consuming the attention of both Trump and top Democrats, the talks seem to be on an indefinite pause. The urgency has evaporated now that rank-and-file lawmakers have been set free for the August recess, and while both sides still want an agreement—and pressure is likely to remain high—it's looking more like a September legislating effort than an August one.

The impasse leaves millions of jobless people without a $600-per-week pandemic bonus jobless benefit that has helped families stay afloat, leaves state and local governments seeking fiscal relief high and dry, and holds back a more than $100 billion school aid package. Money for other priorities, including the election, may come too late, if at all.

Still, it's not like Washington politicians to leave so much money on the table. No one is giving up on an accord, though near-term prospects aren't promising. Based on weeks of reporting on the talks, here's a look at the key obstacles to an agreement:

DEMOCRATIC HARDBALL

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who's displaying her stern streak in her dealings with top Republicans, and top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer of New York, have adopted hardball negotiating tactics as they survey a tactical landscape that favors them. They have given some ground on the overall price tag, but say it's up to Republicans to acknowledge the scope of the crisis.

Trump is eager for an agreement, much of the country expects one, and it's not too difficult to sketch one out on paper. But Pelosi may have to cede ground to Trump and White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, who have largely abandoned the talks when confronted with Pelosi's demands. And Trump's team ultimately may have to make more concessions than they think since Republicans are split.

WHITE HOUSE INEXPERIENCE

Meadows made his name in Washington—and he's unpopular in many quarters in both parties—as a tea party bomb-thrower who forced out former House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, in 2015. Meadows has never been a consensus builder and he seems focused on tending to Trump's conservative flank and trying to make sure that whatever deal is reached doesn't divide Republicans too badly. As such, he's been taking a hard line with Pelosi, and they have been unable to forge a productive relationship and have taken their backbiting public.

Meadows has been understaffed during the talks, which can slow down the complicated horse-trading such a sweeping bill requires. He also appeared to be the principal force behind Trump's threats—and ultimate moves—to issue executive edicts on the payroll tax and unemployment insurance, steps that coincided with the rapid deterioration of the talks. The orders gave Trump a short-term tactical victory, but will do little for the states, schools and families still clamoring for help.

GOP SPLITS

Any upcoming bill is sure to be opposed by many GOP conservatives, who are already agitating for the party to try to reclaim its long-abandoned focus on deficits and debt.

Many Republicans oppose the generous jobless benefits, viewing them as a disincentive to work, and are against other social welfare elements of the legislation. They're in no mood to accept a Pelosi-blessed agreement. But the pragmatic wing of the party wants to restore bonus jobless benefits that have been cut off, and many GOP incumbents up for reelection are agitating for deal.

New York's true nursing home death toll cloaked in secrecy

NEW YORK (AP) — Riverdale Nursing Home in the Bronx appears, on paper, to have escaped the worst of the coronavirus pandemic, with an official state count of just four deaths in its 146-bed facility.

The truth, according to the home, is far worse: 21 dead, most transported to hospitals before they succumbed.

"It was a cascading effect," administrator Emil Fuzayov recalled. "One after the other."

New York's coronavirus death toll in nursing homes, already among the highest in the nation, could actually be a significant undercount. Unlike every other state with major outbreaks, New York only counts residents who died on nursing home property and not those who were transported to hospitals and died there.

That statistic could add thousands to the state's official care home death toll of just over 6,600. But so far the administration of Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo has refused to divulge the number, leading to speculation the state is manipulating the figures to make it appear it is doing better than other states and to make a tragic situation less dire.

"That's a problem, bro," state Sen. Gustavo Rivera, a Democrat, told New York Health Commissioner Howard Zucker during a legislative hearing on nursing homes earlier this month. "It seems, sir, that in this case you are choosing to define it differently so that you can look better."

How big a difference could it make? Since May, federal regulators have required nursing homes to submit data on coronavirus deaths each week, whether or not residents died in the facility or at a hospital. Because the requirement came after the height of New York's outbreak, the available data is relatively small. According to the federal data, roughly a fifth of the state's homes reported resident deaths from early June to mid July —a tally of 323 dead, 65 percent higher than the state's count of 195 during that time period.

Even if half that undercount had held true from the start of the pandemic, that would translate into thousands more nursing home resident deaths than the state has acknowledged.

Asia

TO AVOID BEIJING PROTESTS

Taiwan says virus aid sent quietly

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwan sent COVID-19 assistance to foreign countries surreptitiously to avoid protests from China, its foreign minister said Tuesday during a meeting with the highest-level American official to visit the island in four decades.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory and has sought to isolate it diplomatically, including barring its participation in forums such as the World Health Assembly.

The trip by U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar comes against the backdrop of a sharp downturn in relations between China and the U.S. and Azar said in his remarks that the U.S. supported Taiwan's participation in international health forums.

China's attempts to isolated Taiwan has compelled the island at times to keep its donations of masks and personal protective equipment under the radar, Foreign Minister Joseph Wu said.

"Truth is, we even had to deliver these supplies quietly in some occasions to keep the recipients free from trouble, trouble from Beijing," Wu said.

Taiwan has brought its virus outbreak under control, and Wu said the island has donated 51 million masks overseas, including 10 million to the U.S., along with other items of personal protective equipment. He did not name the other countries to which Taiwan has made quiet donations or give other details.

Just 15 countries maintain formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan, and China has sought to peel away its remaining allies.

Wu said Chinese pressure to accept political conditions for bringing Taiwan under Beijing's control has made life "increasingly difficult."

However, acquiescence would merely turn Taiwan into another Hong Kong, Wu said, referring to recent arrests of media figures and pro-democracy activists under a new national security law being enforced in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

"We know this is not just about Taiwan's status, but about sustaining democracy in the face of authoritarian aggression," Wu said.

Azar described "political bullying" over Taiwan's exclusion from the World Health Organization in 2018 that blocked a million-dollar Taiwanese contribution that would have helped combat an Ebola outbreak in Congo.

"Especially during a pandemic, but at all times, international organizations should not be places to play politics," Azar said.

While the U.S. maintains only unofficial ties with Taiwan in deference to Beijing, it remains the island's most important ally and provider of defensive arms. A 2018 U.S. law urged Washington to send increasingly high-level officials to Taiwan in contrast to past years when such visits were extremely rare. Thus, Azar is the highest-level American official to visit Taiwan since their break in formal diplomatic ties in 1979.

Relations between China and the U.S. have deteriorated over issues ranging from the South China Sea to TikTok, Hong Kong and trade. In a throwback to the Cold War, the two recently ordered tit-for-tat closures of consulates in Houston and Chengdu and rhetorical sniping has become a daily occurrence.

New Zealand scrambles to find source of new virus infections

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Health authorities in New Zealand were scrambling Wednesday to trace the source of a new outbreak of the coronavirus as the nation's largest city went back into lockdown.

Authorities have found four cases of the virus in one Auckland household from an unknown source, the first reported cases of local transmission in the country in 102 days. The news came as an unpleasant surprise to many and raised questions about whether the nation's general election would go ahead as planned next month.

Authorities said two of the people who had tested positive had traveled to the tourist city of Rotorua last weekend while suffering symptoms, and they were now trying to track their movements.

"We are working with urgency to find out what places the family may have visited while in Rotorua over the weekend," Director-General of Health Ashley Bloomfield said. "But the important thing is here, people in Rotorua and indeed around the country should be vigilant about their health and seek advice if they have symptoms."

Auckland was moved to Alert Level 3 at midday Wednesday, a designation initially set to continue through midnight Friday. That means that non-essential workers are required to stay home, while bars, restaurants and most businesses will be closed.

The rest of the country was moved to Alert Level 2, meaning that mass gatherings are limited to 100 attendees and people are required to socially distance themselves.

Bloomfield said they would use genome sequencing as part of their effort to find the source of the new outbreak.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said she had worked quickly to impose the Auckland lockdown measures after first learning about the cases Tuesday afternoon.

"We are taking a rapid response to break the chain of transmission through contact tracing, testing, and the gathering of information," she said.

Ardern said Aucklanders were also "strongly encouraged" but not mandated to wear masks, and that authorities were releasing 5 million masks from a central supply. New Zealanders have not widely worn masks before, although authorities have been urging people to buy them or fashion them from scarves or bandannas just in case.

The nation's parliament was due to be dissolved Wednesday ahead of a general election on Sept. 19 as lawmakers hit the campaign trail. But Ardern said she was delaying the dissolution until at least Monday in case lawmakers needed to meet at short notice. She said she was also seeking advice about options for the election.

Under New Zealand law, the government could delay the election for up to about two months. The main candidates have already cancelled most of their planned campaign events for the rest of the week.

The outbreak was found after a man in his 50s went to his doctor Monday with symptoms and was swabbed twice, testing positive both times. Six other people in the man's household were then tested, with three more testing positive.

The case has health authorities scratching their heads, as the man had not recently traveled overseas and had no immediately apparent connection with infections contained at the border.

World

After multiple crises, this time Lebanese feel broken

BEIRUT (AP)—For nearly a week, Mona Zahran had to sleep on a couch pulled across her apartment's front door. Beirut's massive explosion knocked her doors off their hinges and shattered her windows, and she feared looters would take advantage of the chaos that has hit the Lebanese capital since.

AP

Demonstrators run from tear gas fired by police near the parliament building during a protest against the political elite and the government after a deadly explosion at the seaport last week which devastated large parts of the capital, in Beirut, Lebanon, Sunday, Aug. 9, 2020.

It was the latest and probably most humiliating blow in the turbulent life of the 50-year-old.

A few months ago, Zahran lost her last income as a seamstress because of the combination of anti-government protests, Lebanon's economic collapse and coronavirus restrictions.

Now the Aug. 4 explosion at Beirut's port threatened to rob her of her home as well.

"It is no shame to be poor. But this home is the only thing I have left," said Zahran.

Through past political instability, Lebanese always somehow kept their way of life unshaken. This time, it seems to have been wiped away. Over the last 10 months, Lebanese have had to deal with a dizzying series of events that have upended an artificial sense of security.

Lina Mounzer, a Lebanese writer, said Lebanon has been slowly sinking into a "terrible state" as the post-war project built by warlords and war profiteers and channeled toward "100% profit" with no public or social services goes bankrupt.

With the financial crisis draining the country, poverty now affects nearly half of the population, up from about 20% two years earlier. The banking system —once the jewel of the economy —is in tatters. Unemployment is soaring.

The explosion, she said, propelled the Lebanese "into a parallel timeline."

"Everything we were able to imagine belongs to one world and now we are in the world of the unimaginable," she said. "It is incomparable to anything that any of us has lived before. And we have been through wars."

Zahran's three-story family home is in Karantina, one of Beirut's poorest neighborhoods, overlooking the port.

Scientists uneasy as Russia approves 1st coronavirus vaccine

MOSCOW (AP)—Russia on Tuesday became the first country to approve a coronavirus vaccine, a move that was met with international skepticism and unease because the shots have only been studied in dozens of people.

President Vladimir Putin announced the Health Ministry's approval and said one of his two adult daughters already was inoculated. He said the vaccine underwent the necessary tests and was shown to provide lasting immunity to the coronavirus, although Russian authorities have offered no proof to back up claims of safety or effectiveness.

"I know it has proven efficient and forms a stable immunity," Putin said. "We must be grateful to those who made that first step very important for our country and the entire world."

However, scientists in Russia and other countries sounded an alarm, saying that rushing to offer the vaccine before final-stage testing could backfire. What's called a Phase 3 trial—which involves tens of thousands of people and can take months—is the only way to prove if an experimental vaccine is safe and really works.

By comparison, vaccines entering final-stage testing in the U.S. require studies of 30,000 people each. Two vaccine candidates already have begun those huge studies, with three more set to get underway by fall.

"Fast-tracked approval will not make Russia the leader in the race, it will just expose consumers of the vaccine to unnecessary danger," said Russia's Association of Clinical Trials Organizations, in urging government officials to postpone approving the vaccine without completed advanced trials.

While Russian officials have said large-scale production of the vaccine wasn't scheduled until September, Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova said vaccination of doctors could start as early as this month. Officials say they will be closely monitored after the injections. Mass vaccination may begin as early as October.

"We expect tens of thousands of volunteers to be vaccinated within the next months," Kirill Dmitriev, chief executive of the Russian Direct Investment Fund that bankrolled the vaccine, told reporters.

The vaccine developed by the Gamaleya Institute in Moscow with assistance from Russia's Defense Ministry uses a different virus -- the common cold-causing adenovirus -- that's been modified to carry genes for the "spike" protein that coats the coronavirus, as a way to prime the body to recognize if a real COVID-19 infection comes along.

That's a similar technology as vaccines being developed by China's CanSino Biologics and Britain's Oxford University and AstraZeneca—but unlike those companies, Russian scientists haven't published any scientific information about how the vaccine has performed in animal tests or in early-stage human studies.

Environment

At EPA, coronavirus disrupts research and raises questions over air quality impact

The Chicago skyline seen from the Whihala Beach in Whiting, Indiana, on July 2, 2020.

ZBIGNIEW BZDAK/CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS

By MICHAEL WILNER
MCCLATCHY WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON—A research vessel that has collected data on the Great Lakes for 30 years will remain docked this summer. Government scientists studying the emissions of heavy-duty diesel trucks do not have access to their labs. And Andrew Wheeler, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, is no longer signing critical regulations by hand.

In Wheeler's view, no single event during his tenure has forced more change at the EPA than the coronavirus pandemic—and that includes the climate crisis.

"I think the pandemic is more important," he said. "There's just a lot of changes in how we function."

EPA headquarters was closed and employees have been working from home, but Wheeler, President Donald Trump's second EPA administrator, has gone into the office almost every day. His travel has slowed since the coronavirus outbreak, and he says he misses in-person contact that allowed more in-depth discussions with his staff.

"There are certainly things like that that are going to have more medium to long-term impact on the agency that a lot of people don't realize," Wheeler said in an interview with McClatchy on Friday. "There are certainly lessons learned from the pandemic, and we will be changing how the agency operates and how the federal government operates because of it. But I think it's a little too soon for lessons learned on how we're going to change things."

As head of the EPA, Wheeler has navigated the agency through a series of controversial policy rollouts, repositioning its focus away from climate change toward what he calls the agency's "core missions" of providing clean air and water.

The administration's replacement of stringent government regulations meant to reduce climate-changing carbon dioxide emissions, as well as other pollutants, has drawn widespread criticism from environmental activists, despite Wheeler's insistence that the president's policies have contributed to declines in emissions and air pollution.

But the coronavirus has created challenges for the agency both large and small.

The impact of the pandemic has affected simple functions.

"I'm now signing regulations by digital signature," Wheeler said. "The agency has never done that before. The administrator's always signed everything by hand."

The sheer scope of the pandemic in the United States is also providing the agency with large new datasets on the effects of air pollution and "forever chemicals" such as PFAS on respiratory illnesses.

Preliminary independent studies have suggested a linkage may exist between regions with poor air quality and clusters in COVID-19 cases, and that chemical agents in commercial products could be suppressing the immune system's ability to produce coronavirus-fighting antibodies.

Wheeler said he asked EPA scientists to look into whether air pollution has been a factor in the pandemic.

"I asked my scientists in ORD (Office of Research and Development) just a couple weeks ago, how soon would we be able to make determinations about the impact on air quality as far as COVID deaths?" Wheeler said. "And they said, because the COVID death statistics are honestly questionable, it's going to take us some time to figure out what the impact is and what changes will need to occur."

"We're going to have to take a hard look at the impact of COVID on public health as far as air quality and air pollution," he added.

Research has slowed across much of the agency as employees have been encouraged to follow social distancing guidelines. A research vessel that has sailed the Great Lakes for the past 30 years collecting the government's most comprehensive dataset on that region's habitats will remain docked this summer.

Some regulatory work has also slowed—government researchers have been unable to collect data at the same pace as before, and outside industry groups are submitting data at a slower rate—and at least one highly anticipated new regulation, on heavy-duty trucks, is significantly delayed as a result.

But the agency has also picked up new tasks during the outbreak, issuing new guidance to Americans on what cleaning products are effective at killing the coronavirus on surfaces.

While the Food and Drug Administration approves cleaning products used directly on people, such as hand sanitizer, the EPA approves products such as aerosols, kitchen counter cleaners and disinfectant wipes.

"At the beginning of March we had approved 40 products, and now we've approved over 450 products," Wheeler said. "Our guys are very creative, and created an app that people can download on their phones when they go to the store to make sure that the product they're buying is effective against coronavirus."

Despite the pandemic's impact on the agency, Wheeler has managed to deliver on a deregulatory agenda core to Trump's reelection strategy, announcing some of the EPA's most significant actions of his tenure during the height of the crisis.

The administration finalized a rule on fuel efficiency standards for cars after a belabored process that divided the auto industry and infuriated California's state government. And it helped the White House complete significant revisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, a cornerstone conservation law that protects communities against construction projects that could damage local environments.

The EPA's inspector general is now investigating whether agency leadership acted appropriately as it put together its final rule for tailpipe standards, and whether career EPA officials were sidelined. Wheeler rejected that notion and said he would fully cooperate with the probe.

"They were not shut out," he said. "The criticism is unfounded, and I'm sure that the IG will—it should be a fairly quick review by the IG. We followed the exact same procedures that have been followed by the agency in previous administrations, including the Obama administration."

He also pushed back against Democratic lawmakers who have roundly criticized the president's changes to NEPA, announced in a major event on the South Lawn of the White House.

"We actually provided in the NEPA regs for community involvement earlier in the process, which I think is very important," Wheeler said. "One thing that we did in this administration is take environmental justice out of the enforcement office and put it into the administrator's office, so that we could focus on environmental justice across the board and in everything. I don't think you should wait till the end. I don't think you should wait until enforcement actions to think about environmental justice."

The timing of such large policy announcements has raised red flags among environmentalist groups, which have accused Wheeler of exploiting the pandemic crisis as cover for a dramatic series of environmental rollbacks.

As a former lobbyist for the coal industry and senior aide to Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., who once brought a snowball onto the Senate floor in 2015 as evidence against global warming, Wheeler is familiar with the criticism.

"People say I'm doing this for former clients. I have no financial interests with former clients. You know, at the end of the day, under our administration, air pollution has dropped 7%," Wheeler said.

While Wheeler has said he views climate change as a distant concern, 50 to 75 years down the line, he has acknowledged that the threat is real and that he is unable to identify its tipping point.

Nevertheless he remains a defender of fossil fuels—not only as a source of jobs but as a reliable source of energy in an unstable world.

Wheeler recalled as a child on the outskirts of Cincinnati in the 1970s being stuck at home for over a month, prevented by a polar vortex from attending school because natural gas pipelines were too cold to fuel the Ohio Valley.

The experience ingrained in Wheeler a lesson that has proven especially prescient during the coronavirus pandemic.

"Because of crises, you can't depend on any one energy source—you have to have multiple energy sources," Wheeler said. "I played poker for three weeks, and then did all my homework the last week before I went back to school. So you know, it's—we need nuclear. We need solar. We need wind. We need coal. We need natural gas. We need all of it."

Life & Style

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

The Weeknd, Roddy Ricch, Maluma, CNCO to perform at MTV VMAs

NEW YORK (AP)—Chart-topping Grammy winners The Weeknd and Roddy Ricch are set to perform at the 2020 MTV Video Music Awards this month. MTV announced Tuesday that Colombian singer Maluma and Latin boy CNCO will also perform at the Aug. 30 event, which was originally to take place at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn. The awards show will now be held outdoors at various places in New York City in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Previously announced performers include BTS, Doja Cat and J Balvin, while Keke Palmer will host the awards show. This year's VMAs introduces two new categories reflecting the current pandemic times: best music video from home and best quarantine performance. Lady Gaga and Ariana Grande are the top contenders with nine nominations apiece. They are nominated for the top prize, video of the year, with their No. 1 collaboration "Rain on Me." The Weeknd and Billie Eilish are the second-most nominated acts with six apiece. They are also up for video of the year with "everything i wanted" and "Blinding Lights," competing with Taylor Swift's "The Man," Future and Drake's "Life Is Good" and Eminem's "Godzilla," which features late rapper Juice WRLD. Ricch is up for three honors, including song of the year for his No. 1 hit "The Box." CNCO has two nominations, and Maluma scored a single nod.

Fox news, business cable channels to stream internationally

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Fox News and Fox Business channels are going international. A digital streaming service with the pair will launch in Mexico on Aug. 20, expanding to Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom on Sept. 17, Fox News Media said Tuesday. Fox News International will be available in 20 countries by the end of 2020, the Fox Corp.-owned company said. Along with live streams of the news and business channels, the service will include an on-demand catalog of 20-plus shows including top-rated cable news programs "Hannity" and "Tucker Carlson Tonight" and, among business programs, "Maria Bartiromo's Wall Street." The service, which comes with a $6.99 monthly price tag, will be available on devices including smart phones and Apple TV, with Amazon Fire TV and Roku to follow.

All Night Long: Lionel Richie recalls closing 1984 Olympics

By TIM DAHLBERG
AP SPORTS WRITER

With the Tokyo Olympics postponed for a year because of the coronavirus pandemic, The Associated Press is looking back at the history of Summer Games. Lionel Richie, then just starting his solo career, spoke to the AP recently about his performance at the closing ceremony of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

In this Aug. 12, 1984, file photo, American singer Lionel Ritchie performs during the closing ceremony of the Summer Olympics Games in Los Angeles, AP

Lionel Richie was just beginning his career away from the Commodores when he got word he was wanted for what would be the biggest solo gig of his life.

The Los Angeles Olympics were just a few months away and closing ceremony producer David L. Wolper had a problem. He wanted to put on an all-star singing finale to close out the games, but the stars weren't cooperating.

Michael Jackson was out because he was a Pepsi spokesman and this was a Coca Cola Olympics. Frank Sinatra wasn't available, and neither were other artists whose managers didn't want them appearing in an ensemble act.

So it was left to Richie to bring the curtain down on the first Olympics in the United States in 52 years.

"Next thing I know is I'm on a football field out in the (San Fernando) valley somewhere rehearsing with all these people diving and dancing all over," Richie recalled in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "I was just getting my feet wet after the Commodores. I think I had done a couple Vegas shows just to warm up, but nothing like this."

The audience would be vast, so the song had to be good. Some 92,000 people had tickets to the LA Coliseum that night, and an estimated 2.6 billion more would tune into the closing ceremony on television.

Richie's new solo album had several hits, but he knew there was only one song to end the celebration that was the successful Los Angeles games.

He would do *All Night Long*. And he did it almost all night long, singing for 9 minutes as athletes danced on the field and people rocked in their seats.

"I basically just re-enacted the entire *All Night Long* video and brought it to life on stage," Richie said. "For the first time in my life they were saying don't worry about the budget and just do the song. It was a brilliant moment."

Before Richie took the stage there had already been a spaceship dubbed "The Aluminum Taco" by producers that hovered over the Coliseum, depositing a 10-foot-tall alien who got out and hung around the Olympic flame. The E.T. movie had just come out two years earlier, and aliens were still a theme.

Break dancers were big at the time, too, which is how Richie found himself surrounded by several hundred of them as he paraded around the stage inside the Coliseum. Among the break dancers was a 16-year-old named Cuba Gooding Jr., who would go on to big things of his own in Hollywood in later years.

"He turned to me and said, Mr. Richie I want to make sure this works, we'll make you look good," Richie recalled. "I said, kid, your mom and dad aren't going to be looking at me they'll be looking at you. Go out and have the best time of your life because they'll remember this for a lifetime. Years later he came up to me and said do you remember me backstage?"

Richie hit the stage in white pants and a sparkling open blue glitter blazer. As he began singing some of the break dancers began crashing around him because the stage was slick with evening dew.

As the words came out, the dancing in the stadium began. Athletes from around the world partied like it was 1984, and kept partying until they were finally told to leave the stadium.

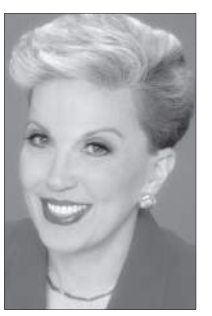
"Well, my friends, the time has come," Richie sang in the song's Calypso style, "to raise the roof and have some fun."

Richie was already a star on the verge of breaking out. Now he was a global superstar, something he found out quickly enough the next day.

Older boyfriend considers meeting in person too risky

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: I have a dilemma. My 33-year-old boyfriend keeps badgering me to see each other. We live 15 miles apart.

I'm a 60-year-old man in pretty good health. Before this pandemic, I worked out every day at a gym, and I still do at home now. Every day he keeps asking me to either come visit or if he can come here. Because of this shelter-in-place advisory, I have been telling him I'm more at risk due to my age. He then tries to make me feel guilty by saying things like, "We are both fine; there's no need to worry," and, "OK. Fine! That's the last time I'm going to ask. See you next month ... MAYBE."

The thing is, he's a nurse in a hospital. I live with two roommates who are also in their 60s, and I don't want to compromise them or my living situation. Am I doing the right thing? What are the risks if I decide to go for a visit and be with him?

UNEASY IN THE WEST

DEAR UNEASY: You are doing the intelligent thing. What your boyfriend is proposing is risky. Because you don't want to possibly risk exposing your roommates to COVID-19, you cannot travel back and forth.

In my opinion, your boyfriend has a moral and ethical responsibility not to put YOU at risk. Here in Los Angeles, some hospital employees who live in multigenerational households have arranged to live apart from their loved ones during this crisis to prevent possibly exposing their families to the virus—an arrangement that in some cases lasts for months.

If your boyfriend was concerned about your welfare, he would not be trying to guilt or threaten you into seeing him. IF you agree to visit him and plan to continue, find an apartment in which you live alone and do not visit your roommates unless you have first been tested and quarantined.

DEAR ABBY: My 50-year-old estranged daughter-in-law was abused by her brother growing up, and her father defends the abuser, which upsets her no end. I'm friendly with her father because he has been nice to me, and this revelation was news to me.

My daughter-in-law sent an email to me and others saying how hurt she is. I would like to respond, but since I'm friendly with her father, I'm not sure what to say. I want to tell her I am deeply sorry for her having been abused because it is extremely traumatic. Do you have any advice for me?

I love my son and his family, and I don't understand how things got this way between us. They no longer speak to me or let me (or my wife) have a relationship with my grandchildren, whom we love very much.

HURT FATHER-IN-LAW IN TEXAS

DEAR HURT: It is not surprising that your son and daughter-in-law are now estranged from you and don't want you around their children. Things got this way because you placed as high a priority on your friendship with the father who defends her abuser as you did on your relationship with your daughter-in-law. While you understand that what happened to her was traumatic, you seem unable to grasp just how painful it has been for her. By siding with the wrong person because he was nice to you, you have intensified her trauma.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

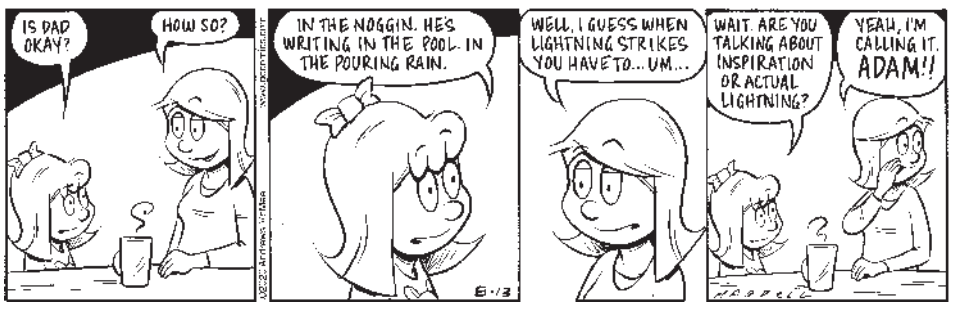
HELLO?
HI DAD! IT'S ME, CALVIN.
CALVIN, UNLESS THIS IS REALLY IMPORTANT, HANG UP, OK? I'M VERY BUSY.
OK, DAD. GOODBYE.
THIS SHOULD QUALIFY IN ANOTHER 15 MINUTES.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


IS DAD OKAY?
HOW SO?
IN THE NOGGIN. HE'S WRITING IN THE POOL. IN THE POURING RAIN.
WELL, I GUESS WHEN LIGHTNING STRIKES YOU HAVE TO... UM...
WAIT. ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT INSPIRATION OR ACTUAL LIGHTNING?
YEAH, I'M CALLING IT. ADAM!!

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

THE COACH GAVE YOU THE HIT-AND-RUN SIGN. WHY DIDN'T YOU?
PHOOEY!
I GET THAT SIGN MIXED UP WITH ANOTHER.
WHICH ONE... THE STRIKE-OUT SIGN?

CROSSWORD

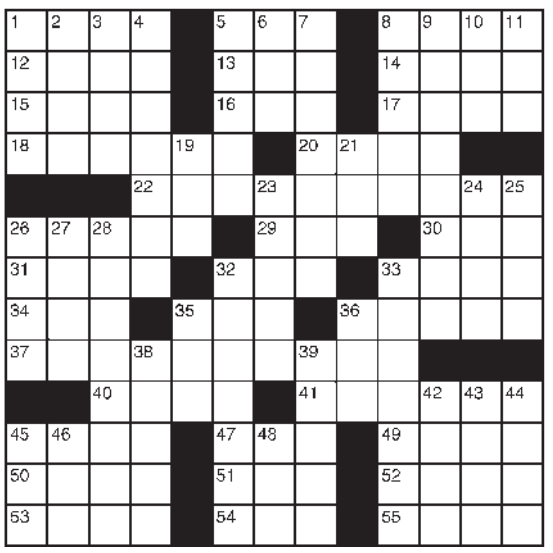
By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Hostels
5 Fixed
8 Con job
12 Borscht veggie
13 Earth Day mo.
14 Spinning sound
15 Stallion's mate
16 — chi
17 Galley supply
18 Pay a visit
20 Hoedown site
22 Good judgment
26 Confronted
29 Berliner's cry
30 Where Lux. is
31 "The game —!"
32 CEO's deg.
33 Roman 1052
34 Numbered rd.
35 Bando of baseball
36 Stickum
37 Intuition
40 Debtors' notes
41 Former Disney head
45 Mediocre
47 AOL, for one
49 Beginner
50 Golf stroke
51 By means of
52 500 sheets
53 Go angling
54 Immigrant's subj.
55 Director Preminger

DOWN
1 Some PCs
2 Spruced up
3 Infamous emperor
4 Songwriter Sondheim
5 Nymph pursuer
6 Clean air org.
7 SoHo neighbor
8 Took an oath
9 Remote selections
10 Melody
11 Doubtfire or Dalloway
19 Physique
21 Cigar residue
23 Shade of black
24 Business attire
25 Buffalo's lake
26 Evergreens
27 Sparkling Italian wine
28 Lives together
32 Huge
33 Orchestra leader
35 Moo — pork
36 Greek letter
38 Canine, for one
39 Himalayan land
42 Russian refusal
43 Part of Q.E.D.
44 Former Dallas QB Tony
45 Beach lotion letters
46 Gigi's "yes"
48 Bro's kin

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 8-13



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Shani Davis, 38; Debi Mazar, 56; John Slattery, 58; Dawnn Lewis, 59.

Happy Birthday: Your associations will make or break you this year. Choose your allies carefully, and know enough to walk away from users and unreliable people. Set rules and stipulations when working with others. Focus on what's important to you, and do your best to grow intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. Do for yourself, and you will achieve what you set out to do. Your numbers are 7, 10, 16, 25, 33, 41, 44.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Pick up the slack, and do your best to finish what you start. Don't let what other people do interfere with your plans or lead to emotional turmoil. Do whatever will bring you joy or help you advance. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Pay attention to the way you look and feel. Don't worry about what others think or say. You are responsible for your happiness, so don't wait for someone to do things for you. Make opportunities; build a stable future. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Keep a tally of what you do for others, and when the time comes, don't hesitate to call in favors. An idea you have to improve your surroundings will pay off. Do the work yourself, and you'll save yourself a bundle. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Sharing information concerning pending financial, medical or legal matters will work against you. Someone will use what you reveal to make you look bad. Focus on personal improvement and spending quality time with loved ones. A creative outlet is favored. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Spend more time with people you look up to or who inspire you to do your very best. A show of enthusiasm will encourage others to pitch in and help you get things done to improve the way you live. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Focus on what you can do to make your life better, not on the things you cannot change. Personal victory comes with loving who you are and believing in what you do. A passionate approach to whatever you pursue will pay off. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Be open to suggestions, observe what's going on around you and take better care of yourself mentally, physically and emotionally. Address whatever is causing anxiety and stress, and implement positive lifestyle changes. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Pay attention to the way you look and represent yourself. Refuse to let possessiveness and jealousy take over. Put faith in what you want to pursue and how you go about your business. It's up to you which path you choose. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Take care of personal business. Make positive changes at home that will bring you closer to loved ones and make your surroundings more suitable for whatever you want to accomplish. Don't let your emotions undermine you. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* What you do today will make a difference in how others feel about you. Wise decisions, positive changes and a demonstration of kindness and consideration will encourage others to see things your way and support the changes you want to enforce. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Make meaningful partnerships a priority in order to avoid getting caught in a no-win situation. Being upfront about how you feel will help alleviate any uncertainty regarding what you want to do and the changes you want to make. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Keep your secrets and emotions to yourself, and you'll avoid being the topic of conversation. Concentrate on what you can do to help others, and it will take your mind off emotional situations you cannot change. Romance is on the rise. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are fun-loving, enthusiastic and humorous. You are assertive and persistent.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		4		5		7	
8			6		2		
	2						
4			6	8	1		3
	6			5		1	
7			3	9	2		6
						4	
	4		7				5
	1		9		8		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 8/13

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

2	3	9	4	8	6	5	7	1
7	4	6	5	2	1	8	9	3
1	8	5	7	9	3	4	6	2
6	7	2	3	4	8	9	1	5
9	5	4	1	6	7	2	3	8
3	1	8	2	5	9	7	4	6
8	9	7	6	1	2	3	5	4
4	2	1	9	3	5	6	8	7
5	6	3	8	7	4	1	2	9

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

KEEPING YOUR MIND OCCUPIED Solution: 7 letters

Y	U	E	E	T	A	P	I	C	I	T	R	A	P	O
L	T	N	N	S	E	V	I	T	C	U	D	O	R	P
L	I	I	P	R	U	E	G	A	G	N	E	G	E	L
A	L	T	V	U	A	M	H	O	A	L	A	N	O	A
C	I	U	P	I	E	E	A	E	K	N	T	I	C	N
O	Z	O	U	C	Ⓣ	K	L	C	I	E	W	T	C	T
L	E	R	Z	O	Ⓐ	C	A	Z	R	A	I	T	U	I
O	S	E	Z	O	Ⓢ	T	A	T	S	D	B	I	P	N
R	D	A	L	K	Ⓚ	T	A	G	E	B	S	N	Y	G
I	R	D	E	P	I	I	I	A	N	V	D	K	A	N
N	A	T	E	O	N	J	S	M	I	I	I	S	L	I
G	C	E	N	I	L	N	O	E	T	I	K	T	P	K
H	L	I	E	E	T	A	K	S	I	N	G	R	C	L
S	O	C	I	A	L	M	E	D	I	A	S	A	O	A
J	U	M	P	S	H	C	R	A	E	S	D	R	O	W

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Active, Activity, Amuse, Arts, Call, Cards, Clean, Coloring, Cook, Engage, Entertain, Games, Ideas, Jigsaw, Join, Jumps, Kids, Kite, Knitting, Learn, Occupy, Online, Organization, Participate, Planting, Play, Productive, Puzzle, Read, Routine, Sing, Skate, Sketch, Sleep, Social Media, Tackle, Take Up, Task, Utilize, Walking, Word Search, Working

Yesterday's Answer: Toppings

The NEW **Treasury 41** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Lillard scores 61 as Blazers beat Mavs

FLORIDA (AP)—Damian Lillard tied his career high with 61 points, and the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Dallas Mavericks 134-131 on Tuesday night to move into eighth place in the Western Conference.

The Blazers will clinch a spot in the play-in series for the last playoff spot out West with a win Thursday against Brooklyn.

Lillard made nine 3-pointers in his sixth 50-point game of the season. He's the 12th player in NBA history to score 50 points in back-to-back games after dropping 51 on the 76ers on Sunday.

Carmelo Anthony added 26 points on 10-of 17 shooting for Portland.

Kristaps Porzingis scored 36 points and Luka Doncic had 25 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds for the Mavericks, who will finish No. 7 in the West.

AP

Dallas Mavericks forward Maxi Kleber, left, blocks the shot of Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard (0) during the second half of an NBA game Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2020, in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

Bubble MVP

There will be an NBA Bubble MVP.

The league announced that there will be an All-Seeding Games Team and a Player of the Seeding Games, honoring the best performers from the seeding games that started July 30 and will conclude Friday.

The awards will be announced Saturday afternoon, prior to Game 1 of the Western Conference play-in series.

A panel of sportswriters and broadcasters who have been on-site at the Walt Disney World resort covering the season restart will vote for the award winners. There will be a five-player first team and a five-player second team, with no breakdowns by position.

Top candidates would likely include Phoenix's Devin Booker, Doncic, Lillard, Houston's James Harden, Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo, and Indiana's T.J. Warren.

Spurs 123, Rockets 105

Keldon Johnson had 24 points and 11 rebounds, and the Spurs kept alive their chance of becoming the first team in NBA history to make 23 consecutive playoff appearances.

DeMar DeRozan scored 23 points for San Antonio, which has won five of seven since arriving in the Florida bubble.

The Western Conference is guaranteed to have a play-in for its final playoff spot. The Spurs will need help to be one of the teams playing this weekend for the final spot, but made sure they couldn't be eliminated Tuesday with their win.

Russell Westbrook had 20 points and seven turnovers in his first game back in the lineup for Houston after missing two games with a bruised right quadriceps.

The Rockets played without guards James Harden (rest) and Eric Gordon (ankle).

Suns 130, 76ers 117

Booker scored 35 points and the Suns protected their playoff hopes by beating the 76ers to remain undefeated in the NBA restart.

Booker became the Suns' career leader with his 91st 30-point game, breaking a tie with Walter Davis.

Mikal Bridges had 24 points for the Suns, who pulled into a ninth-place tie in the Western Conference with Memphis, a half-game behind new No. 8 Portland.

Phoenix is 7-0 as the only undefeated team in the restart.

Alec Burks led the 76ers with 23 points. Philadelphia, No. 6 in the East and already assured of a playoff spot, is attempting to prepare for the postseason after losing Ben Simmons to a knee injury.

Celtics 122, Grizzlies 107

Jayson Tatum scored 29 points, and the Celtics put the Grizzlies in further danger of missing the playoffs.

The Grizzlies missed another chance to guarantee themselves a spot in the West play-in series. They dropped to ninth in the conference with Portland's victory over Dallas.

Boston (48-23), which has already locked up the Eastern Conference's third seed, won its fourth straight.

Gordon Hayward added 19 points and five assists.

Memphis (33-39) lost for the sixth time in seven games since the restart. Ja Morant finished with 26 points and 13 assists.

Memphis heads to its final seeding game against Milwaukee on Thursday needing a win to earn a place in the play-in game. The team that finishes ninth would have to beat the eighth-place team twice.

Bucks 126, Wizards 113

Brook Lopez scored 24 points and Milwaukee beat Washington after Antetokounmpo was ejected in the second quarter for headbutting Moritz Wagner.

Wagner took a charge from Antetokounmpo, who didn't like the call in what had become a physical game early on.

During a break in the action with Milwaukee challenging the call, Antetokounmpo approached Wagner on the way to the bench and started jabbering at him before headbutting him and drawing the ejection.

Kings 112, Pelicans 106

Harrison Barnes scored 25 points, including 12 in the third quarter, and the Kings beat the Pelicans.

The Kings earned their second win in the NBA restart -- each over the Pelicans.

With both teams eliminated from the playoffs, among the top starters given the night off were Pelicans rookie Zion Williamson and Kings leading scorer De'Aaron Fox.

Jahlil Okafor led New Orleans with 21 points. Lonzo Ball added 16 points while making four 3-pointers.

Nets 108, Magic 96

Jeremiah Martin and Timothe Luwawu-Cabarrot each scored 24 points, leading Brooklyn to the victory.

Dzanan Musa added 17 points and Tyler Johnson had 14 for the Nets, who improved to 5-2 in the restart with their third straight victory.

With the Nets locked into the No. 7 seed in the Eastern Conference and the Magic eighth, the teams went with limited rosters while getting players extra rest. Brooklyn suited up nine players and Orlando used 10.

Portland nips Orlando to claim MLS is Back title

FLORIDA (AP)—Dario Zuparic's first goal of the season gave Portland a 2-1 victory against Orlando in the MLS is Back finale Tuesday night.

Orlando was slow to react to Diego Valeri's corner kick in the 66th minute, allowing Eryk Williamson to collect the ball, change direction and take a shot that Jeremy Ebobisse deflected to Zuparic's feet. Zuparic didn't have to do much to get it byPedro "The Octopus" Gallese, who had made two fantastic saves in the lead-up to the corner kick.

The goal set off a raucous celebration on the sideline and sent Orlando into panic mode. The Lions had a chance in the closing minutes, but failed to get the equalizer.

The Timbers, who spent 39 days in the MLS bubble and remained on West Coast time, hugged, danced and doused each other with water after the final whistle. They later raised the silver trophy on the pitch.

It provided a lasting memory for the MLS, which managed to play 51 matches in 45 days at ESPN's Wide World of Sports complex at Disney World.

No family. No friends. No fans.

But it was by most accounts a rousing success, especially considering how it started. FC Dallas and Nashville were forced to withdraw days before the start because of positive coronavirus tests.

Players, coaches and support personnel were tested regularly inside the MLS bubble. The league reported just two positives out of nearly 35,000 tests following the initial setbacks that threatened to derail a tournament that came with a $1.1 million purse.

Portland will get $328,000 in prize money to split. The Timbers also earned a berth in the CONCACAF Champions League, their first since 2016.

Orlando settled for $150,000 to share.

Orlando's appearance in the finale was a surprise considering the team finished 11th out of 12 in the East last season and fired coach James O'Connor. Oscar Pareja took over in 2020 and has made an immediate impact.

Pareja convinced his players, including star Nani, to settle into the bubble several days early. They won the tournament opener, a group-stage victory against Miami, and ended up spending nearly seven weeks quarantined in the bubble.

Portland's experience—the Timbers won the MLS title in 2015 and were runners-up two years ago—showed in the finale.

Portland's first shot on goal found the back of the net.

Valeri delivered a perfectly placed free kick into the box that Larrys Mabiala headed past Gallese in the 27th minute. It was Valeri's 93rd assist with the Timbers.

But considering Portland has managed just three clean sheets in its last 23 matches, it was no surprise to see a defensive breakdown just a few minutes later.

Nani worked the ball down the left side following a turnover and created enough room to get a crosser into the box. Mauricio Pereyra got a foot on the ball and then took advantage of a fallen defender to tie the match.

The equalizer came shortly after Portland's Sebastian Blanco and Orlando coach Pareja exchanged words during a hydration break. Referees stepped between them, and they later apologized and hugged it out.

The league resumes its regular season Wednesday night with Dallas playing at Nashville. The league's 26 teams will play 18 games apiece. A majority of the games will be played without fans because of local regulations. Teams will be subject to a rigorous testing protocol and will use charter flights or buses to limit outside contact.

Machado's grand slam sends Padres over Dodgers

AP
San Diego Padres' Manny Machado, second from right, celebrates with Fernando Tatis Jr., center, after hitting a grand slam as Los Angeles Dodgers catcher Austin Barnes, right, kneels at the plate during the third inning of a baseball game Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2020, in Los Angeles.

LOS ANGELES (AP)— Manny Machado slugged a grand slam after two consecutive errors by the Dodgers in the third inning, Garrett Richards won for the first time in two years, and the San Diego Padres defeated Los Angeles 6-2 on Tuesday night.

The Padres have taken the first two games of the series after dropping two of three to the Dodgers last week in San Diego, and have won a season-best three in a row overall.

"We're just trying to be the best team when we step out on the field every single day," Machado said. "Whether it was the Dodgers, Colorado, San Fran, Arizona. Just go out there and play our best game. Try to be the best Padre team out there on the field. If we can do that, we can play some very good baseball."

Richards (1-1) won his first game since July 4, 2018, shortly before having Tommy John surgery that delayed his readiness for the 2019 season. The right-hander allowed one run and six hits in six innings. He struck out three and walked two.

Drew Pomeranz got the final out to earn his fourth save.

Machado's 10th career slam came off Ross Stripling (3-1) not long after the Padres acquired his brother-in-law, first baseman Yonder Alonso from Atlanta. Alonso returns to San Diego, where he played from 2012-15 and Machado and Alonso's sister make their offseason home.

Blue Jays 5, Marlins 4

In the first major league game in Buffalo since 1915, Travis Shaw hit an RBI single in the 10th inning and the Toronto Blue Jays settled into their new nest with a win over the Miami Marlins.

Barred from playing in Toronto by the Canadian government over concerns about the coronavirus, the Blue Jays spent nearly three weeks on the road before moving into the ballpark of their Triple-A affiliate as their temporary home this year.

Toronto starter Hyun Jin Ryu allowed two hits in six innings and struck out seven.

Brian Anderson also homered for Miami. Starter Elieser Hernandez struck out five over 5 1/3 innings.

Angels 6, Athletics 0

Dylan Bundy threw seven scoreless innings of four-hit ball, Jason Castro hit a three-run homer and Los Angeles defeated Oakland and won back-to-back games for the first time this season.

Anthony Rendon, Castro and Brian Goodwin homered in the fourth off Mike Fiers (1-1), and David Fletcher homered in the sixth inning to give the Angels back-to-back home games with at least four homers for the first time in franchise history.

That was more than enough offense for Bundy (3-1), who struck out 10 with one walk.

Giants 7, Astros 6, 10 innings

Brandon Crawford's RBI single in the 10th inning lifted the San Francisco Giants to win over the Houston Astros.

Austin Slater singled off Cy Sneed (0-3) to start the 10th and send Wilmer Flores to third after he started on second under the new extra-innings rules. Crawford then followed with his grounder to center field to score Flores. Trevor Gott (1-0) walked one in a scoreless ninth for the win and Tyler Rogers struck out two in a perfect 10th for his first save.

White Sox 8, Tigers 4

Eloy Jimenez hit a three-run homer in the first inning, and Chicago snapped Detroit's four-game winning streak.

Edwin Encarnacion also went deep for the White Sox, who won for only the second time in seven games. Austin Romine hit a two-run shot for Detroit.

Jose Abreu had three hits, including a pair of RBI doubles.

Cubs 7, Indians 1

Jon Lester looked comfortable on a mound where he helped make history and Jason Heyward hit a three-run homer, leading Chicago to a win over Cleveland, which welcomed back manager Terry Francona after a couple bumpy days.

Lester (2-0) allowed three hits in six innings as the Cubs moved to 11-3 for the first time since 2016.

For the first time this year the Indians gave up more than four runs, ending the second-longest run (18 games) to open a season.

Nationals 2, Mets 1

Max Scherzer showed no effects of hamstring trouble, navigating heavy traffic early for his first win this season, and Trea Turner hit a record-breaking leadoff homer to help Washington beat New York.

Howie Kendrick had three hits and Victor Robles blooped an RBI single for the Nationals, who have taken the first two in a four-game series between NL East rivals. New York (7-11) dropped to 3-7 at home this season.

Rick Porcello (1-2) threw six solid innings but was outpitched by Scherzer (1-1).

Yankees 9, Braves 6

Aaron Judge dented an advertisement with a scorching home run before making an unusual early exit, Jordan Montgomery pitched efficiently against a lineup missing its brightest young star and New York beat Atlanta.

Atlanta scratched Ronald Acuna Jr. about 90 minutes before first pitch with a sore left wrist.

Judge smashed his homer off a sign above the home bullpen in right-center field, leaving his mark on a shot leading off the fifth.

Reds 6, Royals 5, 10 innings

Joey Votto doubled home the winning run in the 10th and Cincinnati blew another late lead before rallying past Kansas City.

The Royals tied it 5-5 in the eighth on Ryan McBroom's pinch-hit, two-run homer off Amir Garrett, but they couldn't keep their four-game winning streak going.

With a designated runner on second base in the 10th, Josh Staumont (0-1) walked Nick Castellanos and Votto doubled off the wall in center.

Orioles 10, Phillies 9, 10 innings

Austin Hays hit a two-run, inside-the-park homer in the 10th inning to lift Baltimore over Philadelphia.

Bryce Harper hit a tying, two-run homer in the eighth and Jean Segura gave the Phillies a 6-5 lead with a solo shot two outs later. But closer Hector Neris couldn't hold it.

After Orioles closer Cole Sulser (1-1) allowed a two-run single to Didi Gregorius with two outs in the ninth to tie it at 8, Hays put Baltimore ahead to stay.

With a runner on second to start the extra inning, Hays ripped a sinking liner to center off Deolis Guerra (1-2). Roman Quinn dove headfirst and the ball skipped to the warning track. Quinn fell picking it up and Hays circled the bases.

Paul Fry allowed an RBI single in the 10th but got a bouncer for the second out. Travis Lakins Sr. got Rhys Hoskins on a grounder, earning his first career save.

Rays 8, Red Sox 2

Mike Brosseau led off the game with a home run, Yandy Diaz and Hunter Renfroe each had two RBI and Tampa Bay beat Boston.

Brosseau, Diaz and Manuel Margot had multi-hit games as Tampa Bay won its fourth straight game.

Tampa Bay starter Andrew Kittredge exited with right elbow soreness after throwing only five pitches. John Curtiss (1-0) pitched 2 2/3 innings of one-run ball in relief of Kittredge.

Michael Chavis and Alex Verdugo each hit RBI singles for the Red Sox. Martin Perez (2-2) allowed two runs on three hits and struck out five in 5 2/3 innings after tossing five scoreless innings in a 5-0 win at Tampa Bay last Wednesday.

Brewers 6, Twins 4

Jedd Gyorko blasted a tie-breaking two-run homer in the eighth inning as Milwaukee came from behind to beat Minnesota.

The Brewers started their winning rally when Christian Yelich beat the Twins' shift with a one-out double.

Gyorko followed with a shot to center off Taylor Rogers (1-2).

Eddie Rosario of the Twins and Manny Pina of the Brewers each hit two home runs. Minnesota's Jorge Polanco and Milwaukee's Avisail Garcia also homered.

Rangers 4, Mariners 2

Nick Solak singled three times and drove in three runs, leading Texas to a victory over Seattle.

Solak had a two-run single in the first and an RBI hit in third, when Willie Calhoun added another run-scoring single. Calhoun's hit scored slugger Joey Gallo, who was hit by a pitch twice and walked his other two times up.

Left-hander Mike Minor allowed an infield single and three walks with four strikeouts in four scoreless innings but was pulled after 76 pitche.

Edinson Volquez (2-1) was awarded the win by the official scorer after replacing Nick Goody, who came on after Minor and allowed both Seattle runs, one of them unearned.

Rockies 8, Diamondbacks 7

Charlie Blackmon raised his batting average to .500 with three hits, including a key double during a six-run burst in the eighth inning that led Colorado over Arizona.

After starting out the year 0 for 9, Blackmon has hit in 15 straight games. He's 34 for 68 through 17 games in the coronavirus-shortened 60-game season.

Blackmon doubled off Kevin Ginkel (0-1) during the Rockies' big inning that made it 8-2.

The Diamondbacks rallied for five runs in the ninth and had runners on first and third with two outs. Daniel Bard fanned pinch hitter Stephen Vogt to end it and earn his first save since 2011 while with the Boston Red Sox. It was his sixth career save overall.

Nolan Arenado hit a two-run homer and Raimel Tapia added three hits, including a two-run double in the eighth for Colorado.

NFL draft gets tough as college football collapses

NEW YORK (AP) — The process started in June. Every scenario was laid out—good, bad or otherwise—and the skeletons of one NFL team's scouting plans for the 2020 college football season started to formulate.

"Having direct supervision of all area scouts, I knew I needed to have a plan for them in place before any decisions were made [on whether there would be college football]," one NFC college scouting director said.

Scrambling for the 2020 NFL draft after the COVID-19 pandemic first hit was a big enough hurdle for teams this spring. But there's no scouting rubric for how to create a full-year plan for franchises to gather the same level of information they would cull in a normal draft cycle.

That means developing multiple scenarios depending on what happens with college football, the majority of which won't be played this season.

"We're just trying to predict the future here, no big deal," the director deadpanned.

Among the scenarios they planned for to help area scouts sketch out their summer and fall:

No August practice and no scouts allowed on campus in August but maybe some will be allowed in fall.

One scout per NFL team allowed in August and then two scouts per team in fall.

No scouts allowed in August, then one allowed per month per each school.

One scout visit allowed in training camp, and nothing during the fall.

No college football and no visits.

This is just a snapshot of how scouting departments are currently scrambling for the 2020 college football season, with the Big Ten, Pac-12, Mid-American and Mountain West conferences having already punted on a fall football season, along with most FCS schools. Others, too, might follow suit in the days ahead.

AP

A general view of Stanford Stadium on the campus of Stanford University, Thursday, Aug. 6, 2020, in Stanford, Calif. The stadium is the home of the Stanford Cardinal football team, which competes in Pac-12—one of the conferences that had already punted on a fall football season.

And NFL scouting staffs will have to adjust on the fly.

"If there's no college football at all, and information seems to change by the minute, I don't know how it's going to look exactly, but I think we're just going to have to get creative in how we do this," the NFC director said.

Green Bay Packers general manager Brian Gutekunst noted this week that his team's area scouts are "itching" to get back on the road and do their jobs. It's likely not that easy.

Scouts can get character and background information over Zoom chats, which are happening across the country now. They're part of the information-gathering process and not too different from a normal year. But most area scouts, the NFC director said, would already have made "six or seven" school visits by this point, watching practices and talking to multiple people—strength coaches, pro liaisons, assistant and head coaches, plus the players themselves.

The director made sure that one of his worst-case scenarios included no on-campus visits of any kind. At the time he was brewing up those possibilities earlier this summer, some college programs were struggling to contain their early positive coronavirus tests.

"It was like, why would a school want a scout on their campus? They're trying to get their own situation figured out," he said. "At that time, that's when Clemson was getting that outbreak. I'm thinking, 'Man, if a school like Clemson, that has every resource imaginable, can't get theirs under control, I'm sure they're not thinking about us scouts.'"

Some college programs have told scouts not to come. Others that are still conducting business as usual have opened their doors, at least until someone higher up the chain shuts that down.

And likewise, some schools have been very proactive with making all those sources of information available to scouts virtually, in lieu of in-person visits, while others have offered up one person for scouts to speak with.

"Sometimes if you're not there on campus, it might be tougher to track down some of those other sources that might not be on some schools' Zoom calls," the director said.

One NFL team's West Coast scour said: "Guess I'll be scouting from home this year. Not sure when my next trip will be." Most schools in his region won't be playing football this fall, and perhaps not at all before the 2021 NFL draft.

This is where the NFL franchises that have invested heavily in scouting—and the ones that have developed their scouts the best over the past few years—will thrive, while the rest might stumble.

"I'll tell you this, scouts now become more important," Indianapolis Colts general manager Chris Ballard told local media last week. "Let's say the disaster happens, and we're evaluating all of last year's tape. It's going to take real work and real skill to get that done."

Schedule change

Even though some conferences say spring football is possible, and NFL scouting staffs are preparing for it, many don't believe it's happening.

"My personal opinion is that I don't think there's college football in the spring," one talent evaluator said. "I think pushing the spring thing is appeasing [fans], keeping some hope in [their lives].

"It just sounds so vague and ambiguous. Like, 'Oh, we'll have it in the spring.' Well, like, what is spring? Is that Feb. 1? March 1? April 1? Are all sports going to play at the same time? It's just too vague to where I really don't see that."

One reason, as former Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer noted, is safety. Asking players to play a college season in the spring, followed by an NFL season—or another college season—in the fall isn't realistic. That's a lot of wear and tear on players' bodies in a shorter time frame.

"I agree with [Meyer]," the NFC director said. "Say they did push the draft back if they play in the spring. You're still running the risk of it being more unsafe for players.

NORTH

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FSM [the Federated States of Micronesia] are shut down for travel," said Race when asked about the updates on the regional event.

The tournament was supposed to take place from Sept. 5 to 9 in Guam as per the directive from the Oceania Tennis Federation. The competition for U12, U14, and U16 age groups was originally scheduled last June, but was reset due to the COVID-19 pandemic. OTF set the new date last month, but quickly pointed out that the schedule will depend on the availability of flights for the traveling teams and other factors, such as safety.

Guam has seen a rise in the number of COVID-19 cases in the last two weeks, while Palau, though has no reported case, has issued travel restrictions, and the same goes with FSM.

The four island-nations compete in the North Pacific event annually to battle for slots on the North team that will participate in the Pacific Oceania Junior Championships in Fiji.

With no North qualifiers and the East and West squads events also on hold, there's a big possibility that the POJC may also be shelved this year. Initially, the POJC was slated for late July to early August and then was pushed back to October (14-23). There is also a plan to move the POJC further to December if the series of qualifiers will be rescheduled or totally scrapped.

AUSTRIA

From Page 20

videos and pictures of them training and working hard for the upcoming EAFF tournament and it's only fair that I do my share and work as hard as they do," the CNMI player said.

Austria, who is majoring in civil engineering, is taking about the East Asian Football Federation E-1 Men's Football Championship 2021 Preliminary Round 1. His teammates who remain on island are practicing five times a week at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville and are also observing safety guidelines to prevent the spread of the virus.

Meanwhile, barring changes in the schedule, Austria and the Thunder will have their season debut on Sept. 12 when they take on Wheaton College in Illinois. They will then have their conference debut on Sept. 19 in Michigan, while the Thunder's first home game will be on Sept. 23 against Adrian College.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI head coach and Northern Mariana Islands Football Association technical director Michiteru Mita, center, facilitates a training session, while assistant coach Jersh Angeles, right, looks on.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

While their teammates are off-island to see action in various collegiate leagues, members of the CNMI Men's National Team pool continue to practice at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Lillard scores 61 as Blazers beat Mavs

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Machado's grand slam sends Padres over Dodgers

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DESPITE A CHALLENGING ROOKIE SEASON

Austria stays motivated

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The CNMI's Thaiphi Austria is now in Indiana and will debut in the collegiate ranks with Trine University.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Thaiphi Austria, lefts, joins teammate Joshua Mendez in performing warm-up drills during a training session with the CNMI Men's National Team early last month at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

A shortened season will not discourage the CNMI's Thaiphi Austria from working doubly hard in his rookie year in the collegiate ranks.

Austria is now in Angola, Indiana and has started attending classes at Trine University and has also been practicing with his team team—the Thunder.

"I left Saipan last July and last week classes had already started. My schedule is quite busy because I have six classes. I also have practice every day, but beginning tomorrow, we will take one day off every week, according to our coaches," said Austria, who played for the Commonwealth both in the youth and men's national-level teams, making him prime for the collegiate league.

"We will practice from Monday to Saturday and have our rest day on Sunday," the 19-year-old athlete said.

His squad, the Trine Thunder, is an NCAA Division III school and plays in the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association.

Some schools in the MIAA have already withdrawn from the Fall season competition due to the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing organizers to shorten the tournament. Austria is relieved that his school decided to move ahead with the program and although there will be challenges as they cautiously proceed with the season, he is ready to face the upcoming hurdles.

"One of the major requirements is to do a COVID-19 testing 72 hours before the matches. And people who are positive will not participate in the match and will immediately be quarantined off campus," said the former TanHoldings Football Club player.

Despite the limited games and restrictions in training sessions and travels due to safety protocols in place to combat the spread of the pandemic, Austria will capitalize on the opportunity to play this season to familiarize himself with the high-level competition in the collegiate ranks and get ready to represent the CNMI in future tournaments.

"Despite the season being shortened and changes are being made due to the pandemic, I'm going to make the most of the upcoming season. My biggest motivation would be

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North Pacific tennis tourney not possible

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Though no official announcement has been made yet, Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association head and long-time CNMI national team coach Jeff Race said the 2020 North Pacific Regional Championships is unlikely to be held this year.

"It will not be happening. After not going to school since March, the kids would have to be away for three weeks to accommodate travel, quarantine, and competition. Palau and

See NORTH on Page

SAIPAN TRIBUNE
In this 2019 file photo, the CNMI's Serin Chung returns to the Federated State of Micronesia's Nicole Paterson during their girls U14 singles game in the North Pacific Regional Championships at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.